



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

FIRST SESSION, 1920-21.

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Exchange Duplicate, L. C.

EIGHTIETH PARLIAMENT.

Governor-General.*

His Excellency the Right Honorable HENRY WILLIAM, BARON FORSTER, a Member of His Majesty's Most Honorable Privy Council, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, and Commander-in-Chief in and over the Commonwealth of Australia.

* From 6th October, 1920.

Australian National Government.

(From 10th January, 1918.)

Prime Minister and Attorney-General	..	The Right Honorable William Morris Hughes, P.C., K.C.
Minister for the Navy	..	The Right Honorable Sir Joseph Cook, P.C., G.C.M.G. <i>Succeeded by</i> The Honorable W. H. Laird Smith (28th July, 1920).
Treasurer	..	The Right Honorable Lord Forrest, P.C., G.C.M.G. <i>Succeeded by</i> The Right Honorable William Alexander Watt, P.C. (27th March, 1918).†††
Minister for Defence	..	The Right Honorable Sir Joseph Cook, P.C., G.C.M.G. (28th July, 1920).
Minister for Repatriation	..	The Honorable George Foster Pearce.
Minister for Works and Railways	..	The Honorable Edward Davis Millen.
Minister for Home and Territories	..	The Right Honorable William Alexander Watt, P.C. <i>Succeeded by</i> The Honorable Littleton Ernest Groom (27th March, 1918).
Minister for Trade and Customs	..	The Honorable Patrick McMahon Glynn, K.C.†† <i>Succeeded by</i> The Honorable Alexander Poynton, O.B.E. (4th February, 1920).
Postmaster-General	..	The Honorable Jens August Jensen.† <i>Succeeded by</i> The Right Honorable William Alexander Watt, P.C. (13th December, 1918).
Minister for Health	..	The Honorable Walter Massy Greene (17th January, 1919). <i>Succeeded by</i> The Honorable William Webster.††
Vice-President of the Executive Council	..	The Honorable George Henry Wise (4th February, 1920). The Honorable Walter Massy Greene (10th March, 1921). The Honorable Littleton Ernest Groom. <i>Succeeded by</i> The Honorable Edward John Russell (27th March, 1918).
Honorary Minister	..	The Honorable Edward John Russell. Appointed Vice-President of the Executive Council, 27th March, 1918.
Honorary Minister	..	The Honorable Alexander Poynton. Appointed Minister for Home and Territories, 4th February, 1920.
Honorary Minister	..	The Honorable George Henry Wise. Appointed Postmaster-General, 4th February, 1920.
Honorary Minister	..	The Honorable Walter Massy Greene.* Appointed Minister for Trade and Customs, 17th January, 1919.
Honorary Minister	..	The Honorable Richard Beaumont Orchard.**
Honorary Minister	..	The Honorable Sir Granville de Laune Ryrie, K.C.M.G., C.B., V.D.††
Honorary Minister	..	The Honorable William Henry Laird Smith.†† Appointed Minister for the Navy, 28th July, 1920.
Honorary Minister	..	The Honorable Arthur Stanislaus Rodgers.***

* Appointed 26th March, 1918.—† Removed from office, 13th December, 1918.—** Resigned office, 31st January, 1919.—†† Appointed 4th February, 1920.—††† Resigned 3rd February, 1920.—†††† Resignation from office gazetted, 15th June, 1920.—*** Appointed 28th July, 1920.

Senators.

(From 1st July, 1920.)

President—Senator the Honorable Thomas Givens.

Chairman of Committees—Senator Thomas Jerome Kingston Bakhap.

* Adamson, John, C.B.E. (Q.)	* Guthrie, James Francis (V.)
Bakhap, Thomas Jerome Kingston (T.)	Guthrie, Robert Storrie (S.A.)
* Benny, Benjamin (S.A.)	Henderson, George (W.A.)
Bolton, William Kinsey, C.B.E., V.D. (V.)	Keating, Hon. John Henry (T.)
* Buzacott, Richard (W.A.)	* Lynch, Patrick Joseph (W.A.)
* Cox, Charles Frederick, C.B., C.M.G. (N.S.W.)	Millen, Hon. Edward Davis (N.S.W.)
Crawford, Thomas William (Q.)	* Millen, John Dunlop (T.)
De Largie, Hon. Hugh (W.A.)	* Newland, John, C.B.E. (S.A.)
* Drake-Brockman, Edmund Alfred, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O. (W.A.)	* Payne, Hon. Herbert James Mockford (T.)
* Duncan, Walter Leslie (N.S.W.)	Pearce, Hon. George Foster (W.A.)
Earle, Hon. John (T.)	Plain, William (V.)
* Elliott, Harold Edward, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., D.C.M. (V.)	Pretten, Herbert Edward (N.S.W.)
Fairbairn, George (V.)	Reid, Matthew (Q.)
Foll, Hattil Spencer (Q.)	Rowell, James, C.B. (S.A.)
* Foster, George Matthew (T.)	* Russell, Hon. Edward John (V.)
* Gardiner, Albert (N.S.W.)	Senior, William (S.A.)
Gibbons, Hon. Thomas (Q.)	Thomas, Hon. Josiah (N.S.W.)
Howe, Sir Thomas William, K.C.B., C.M.G., O. (Q.)	Vardon, Edward Charles (S.A.)

1. Elected Temporary Chairman of Committees, 21st July, 1920. 2. Elected 13th December, 1919. Sworn 21st Apointed Temporary Chairman of Committees, 26th February, 1920. 4. Decesse reported, 6th Apointed by State Governor in Council, 18th February, 1921. Sworn 6th April, 1921.
* Elected 13th December, 1919. Sworn 1st July, 1920.

Mr. JAMES PAGE.—The honorable member has done nothing else but apologize for the Shipping Combine, whose claws are at the throats of shippers throughout the Commonwealth. Another apologist for the Combine is the Treasurer. The honorable member for Grampians (Mr. Jowett) deserves the thanks of the country for having brought before the House the subject of oversea freights. But his gun is not loaded; he merely makes a noise with blank cartridge. As the honorable member for Perth (Mr. Fowler) has told them times out of number, the Country party have the remedy in their own hands; but they choose to do nothing. Last year they took the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) to task for having spent £10,000,000 without the authority of Parliament, but he told honorable members that they ought to thank God that he had done it, because thereby the whole of the Commonwealth had escaped from the tentacles of a Shipping Combine. Now we find that the Commonwealth Line of Steamers is in that Combine as much as any other line of steamers, but if the Country party are merely going to shoot fireworks the Government are perfectly safe. The honorable member for Franklin (Mr. McWilliams) has pointed out that, whereas the freight on fruit before the war was not higher than 2s. 9d. per case to the United Kingdom, to-day it is 8s. per case. What would happen if any member on this side of the House moved that the freights chargeable by the Commonwealth Line of Steamers should be reduced to the normal conditions applying before the war?

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Does the honorable member think it possible to get back to those conditions with the present cost of labour and the other high charges?

Mr. JAMES PAGE.—No, I do not expect it; but can the Treasurer say that the charges have gone up to an extent that would justify imposing a rate of 8s. per case for fruit to the Old Country?

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—I do not know. I can only say that there are no abnormal profits being made by the Commonwealth Line of Steamers on the overseas trade.

Mr. JAMES PAGE.—But we do not want to make profits. We want to carry the produce of the primary producer—

his wool, tallow, hides, skins, fruit, butter, &c., but not to make a profit in doing so. We have enough business to keep our own boats employed.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—That is not the point. The honorable member complains that the shippers are fleecing the people here, but that remark cannot apply to the Commonwealth Line of Steamers.

Mr. JAMES PAGE.—The Commonwealth Line of Steamers charge the same freights as the others do who fleece us.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Even supposing we do charge the same freights, all I can say is that the charge does not express itself in the shape of inordinate profits.

Mr. JAMES PAGE.—All I can say is that the Commonwealth are in the Combine just as much as other ships are. The Prime Minister told me yesterday that my education as a mathematician had been neglected, but the facts as they present themselves to me are that wool was conveyed to the United Kingdom in 1914 for less than half the cost to-day. The Prime Minister told us that he bought the Commonwealth steamers because he was far-seeing enough to realize that there would be a general combination of shipping throughout the world which would so manipulate freights as to bring injury to the primary producers of Australia. To that sentiment the Corner party said "Hear, hear!"; in fact, they tendered him a dinner, and some of them helped to subscribe £25,000 for him for what he had done. The honorable member for Grampians (Mr. Jowett) is a member of the Pastoralists Union, one of the biggest Combines in Australia, and he does exactly what the other fellow is doing.

When the other man puts the screw on he seeks to have his freights reduced. When I saw the announcement in the press that the honorable member intended to move the adjournment of the House to-day, I realized at once that it meant nothing, and that the motion would go the way of all other adjournment motions; it would end in smoke.

Mr. RILEY.—He would not take a upon it.

Mr. JAMES PAGE.—The danger of that. The Countr

watch him very carefully to see that he does not call for a division.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—If they do not we shall do so.

Mr. JAMES PAGE.—It is a most peculiar fact that when the fate of the Government is at stake both the Country party and the Nationalists have the same object in view. I have no desire to displace the Government on this particular question, but I want it to go out to the world that if honorable members in the corner mean what they say, and no doubt some of them do, the remedy lies in their own hands.

Mr. CORSER (Wide Bay) [4.13].—I was sorry to hear the honorable member for Franklin (Mr. McWilliams) say what he did in reference to the evidence asked for and obtained by the Select Committee appointed to inquire into the sea carriage of goods. He was Chairman of that Committee, and I was a member of it; but if he had attended to his duties as he should have done—and I leave it to him to say that he did—I am sure he would have realized that the exhaustive information the Committee obtained did not bear out in the slightest degree what he has said in the House to-day.

I am pleased that the honorable member for Grampians (Mr. Jowett) has introduced the discussion; but, although I listened to the honorable member carefully, I failed to hear him suggest a remedy. No one who followed him has suggested any. I cannot see how we can bring the overseas shipping combine to their knees, and no one has suggested how it can be done, but, as the honorable member for Grampians is very largely interested in wool, it has occurred to me that there is a way in which his industry could be protected to a considerable extent. Before the drought Australia had 93,000,000 sheep, Russia 72,000,000, the United States of America 48,000,000, and Argentine 43,000,000. Two Australian sheep will produce the value of wool that can be produced by three sheep in Russia. It is clearly evident that we have a control of a vast quantity of the raw material for the woollen manufacturing industry; and why should not manufacture it here so that manufactured article could bear the freight overseas? It could do it more easily than can our raw material.

Taylor, Director of the

Bureau of Commerce and Industry, writing on the 26th February, 1920, said—

Although there may be difficulties, there is no real obstacle in the way of the greater part of the Australian clip being treated, namely, turned into woollen goods, in Australia.

Then he pointed out that to treat 200,000,000 lbs. of greasy wool, representing one-third of the clip, and turn it into worsteds, woollens, and all kinds of piece goods, cloth, flannel, and blankets, would require, on the authority of leading woollen millers, an expenditure of £50,000 for land, £3,200,000 for buildings, £600,000 for power (including heat and light), and £10,000,000 for plant, the total being £13,850,000. If each of the 80,000 wool-growers supplying wool to the Central Wool Committee contributed £200, a sum of £16,000,000 could be raised for the purpose of dealing with our wool clip. Of course, the contribution would not be on a flat rate. Each individual would subscribe according to the number of sheep he held. If we complain of the difficulty of getting our products shipped at anything like the pre-war rate, we must try some means of achieving that object. I recommend the honorable member for Grampians to investigate the scheme I have put forward, and see whether it could not be adopted. It might be possible in this way to do away with the threats that the flocks of sheep of Australia will be largely depleted unless some alteration is made.

Mr. JOWETT.—I am a member of the Bureau to which the honorable member has referred, and I have done everything possible to forward the objects he has mentioned.

Mr. CORSER.—If the producers will not adopt the ideas put forward for their benefit, and will not help themselves, what have they to complain about? The profit to be made upon manufacturing the wool would be distributed among those who subscribed the money to inaugurate the scheme, and if the subscribers are the producers themselves, then they would be deriving a profit out of a secondary industry. I think it is our duty to endeavour to find remedies for existing disabilities in respect of getting our goods to the other side of the world at reasonable rates of freight.

Mr. PROWSE (Swan) [4.19].—I am personally indebted to the honorable member for Grampians (Mr. Jowett) for having brought this matter before the House this afternoon. Even if no definite solution of the difficulty has been propounded by honorable members who have spoken, the time devoted to the debate has not been lost, since it will serve at least to demonstrate to the House the disability under which Australia labours in marketing her primary products in competition with other parts of the world. In dealing with another big question—the Tariff—which is before the House, honorable members will have an opportunity either to increase or to lighten the burdens now resting on our already overburdened producers. The costs that are heaping up on the Shipping Combine, and which, as the Prime Minister has been able to show, are very great, have also been piling up on other industries; but while the Shipping Combine is able to pass on such increased costs, there are primary industries in Australia which are quite unable to do so. If the export of those commodities to which the honorable member for Grampians (Mr. Jowett) has referred is made unprofitable because of the increased cost of production and the charges which are laid upon them, they will simply go out of production, because it will become utterly impossible for us to compete with other countries. Honorable members will have read the statement made by President Harding, as published in this morning's newspapers, in which he wisely recognises that primary production is the principal and fundamental thing for the United States of America. He regards most seriously the fact that primary production there is costing so much that Russia, the Argentine, and other countries can export their produce to America and outdo the local producers. He has, therefore, decided to give the primary industries the benefit of heavy protective duties as a natural corollary to the heavy Protection given to the manufactured products of the country. The fact that one section of industry was protected, while the other was not, brought him to the conclusion which is reported in the press this morning.

I do not regard as likely to be effective the remedy suggested by the honorable

member for Melbourne Ports (Mr. Mathews) for the matters complained of by the honorable member for Grampians. The fleet of vessels which we now have has had no appreciable effect on the situation, and, if our ships of the future are to cost us what we are paying for them to-day, we shall not be able to compete, in the matter of ship construction, with other countries.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—The Labour party say, “Go further” in the matter of ship-building in Australia, while the press say, “Get further out.”

Mr. PROWSE.—Exactly. I find that there are certain honorable members, as well as people who are not honorable in this Australia of ours, who are prepared to advocate the manufacture of certain things in the Commonwealth, no matter what they cost, as long as some one else will pay for them. Possibly there will be an opportunity to increase our fleet either by chartering or purchasing additional vessels, but the evidence we have in regard to the little fleet now owned by the Commonwealth rather inclines us to the belief that they are in the Shipping Combine. A great many people in Australia, provided we got a big fleet, would sympathize with the Combine as long as shipping construction could go on in Australia. Some people do not seem to care what a primary producer has to pay for a plough as long as that plough is made in Australia. Their chief consideration is that everything should be manufactured here. The fact that in their desire to give effect to that principle they may render it more difficult for our farmers to compete with the primary producers of the Argentine is of no concern to some Australians; they care not whether Australia goes out of primary production, and consequently is deprived of the means of obtaining more money from abroad. I am glad, however, that this question has been brought up, because the discussion will aid some people to recognise the position in which Australia is gradually being placed in competition with other countries. We are face to face with a most serious problem, and if things continue as at present, we shall come to a dead-end before we get much further.

Question—That the motion be agreed to—put. The House divided.

Ayes	32
Noes	30
Majority	2

AYES.

Anstey, F.	Mathews, J.
Blakeley, A.	McGrath, D. C.
Brennan, F.	McWilliams, W. J.
Charlton, M.	Moloney, Parker
Considine, M. P.	Nicholls, S. R.
Cook, Robert.	Page, Dr. Earle
Fenton, J. E.	Prowse, J. H.
Fleming, W. M.	Riley, E.
Fowler, J. M.	Ryan, T. J.
Gibson, W. G.	Stewart, P. G.
Gregory, H.	Tudor, F. G.
Hill, W. C.	Watkins, D.
Lavelle, T. J.	West, J. E.

Tellers:

Jowett, E.
Page, James.

NOES.

Atkinson, L.	Jackson, D. S.
Bamford, F. W.	Lamond, Hector
Bayley, J. G.	Lister, J. H.
Bell, G. J.	Mackay, G. H.
Blundell, R. P.	Marks, W. M.
Bowden, E. K.	Marr, C. W. C.
Cameron, D. C.	Maxwell, G. A.
Chanter, J. M.	Poynton, A.
Cook, Sir Joseph	Rodgers, A. S.
C rser, E. B. C.	Ryrie, Sir Granville
Foley, G.	Smith, Laird
Foster, Richard	Wise, G. H.

Tellers:

Burchell, R. J.
Story, W. H.

PAIRS.

McDonald, G.	Bruce, S. M.
Cunningham, L. L.	Chapman, Austin
Catts, J. H.	Francis, F. H.
Gabb, J. M.	Livingston, J.

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

House adjourned at 4.32 p.m.

Senate.

Friday, 15 April, 1921.

The PRESIDENT (Senator the Hon. T. Givens) took the chair at 11 a.m., and read prayers.

ADJOURNMENT.**POSITION OF THE MINISTRY.**

Senator E. D. MILLEN (New South Wales Minister for Repatriation) moved—

—se do now adjourn.

Honorable senators will, I am sure, recognise the association of the motion with the vote taken in another place yesterday afternoon.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Senate adjourned at 11.2 a.m.

House of Representatives.

Friday, 15 April, 1921.

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. Sir Elliot Johnson) took the chair at 11 a.m., and read prayers.

POSITION OF THE MINISTRY.**PERSONAL EXPLANATION.**

Mr. FOWLER (Perth) [11.1].—I wish to make a personal explanation regarding the position which arose yesterday. I sat in my place all the afternoon awaiting an opportunity to speak on the important debate which had occupied the attention of the House during the preceding day, and was the first business set down for yesterday. I thought, perhaps, that the honorable member for Grampians (Mr. Jowett) was ill-advised in interpolating another matter.

Mr. JOWETT.—Had I to ask your consent to move the adjournment yesterday?

Mr. FOWLER.—The representation of Australia at the Imperial Conference is a matter of much more importance than that which the honorable member caused to be discussed yesterday. Towards the close of the discussion on his adjournment motion, a member of the press in the gallery to my immediate left bent over, and asked me for a statement of what had taken place at a meeting of the Public Accounts Committee, of which I am chairman, and I proceeded to give him certain facts. Whilst speaking to him, I was unconscious of what was taking place in the chamber, and misheard as a call of order to me what was a call for order after the House had divided. It was some little time before I realized that a division was being taken, and a little longer before I recognised its import. By that time it was too late for me to change my position. However, I regarded the proceedings as in the nature of a joke; certainly I did not take them

seriously. The situation that has been created carries considerable possibilities for me. There are members of the Ministerial party who strongly resent my vote; but I am sure that the Prime Minister is grateful to me for having afforded him an opportunity to improve his position. For the moment I cannot make up my mind whether I am likely to be expelled from the party or to be offered a portfolio.

Mr. TUDOR.—I have been expecting a statement from a Minister, preferably the Prime Minister, regarding yesterday's vote. I ask what action the Government intends to take, in view of the fact that yesterday the business was taken out of their hands. Do Ministers intend to hang on to office?

ADJOURNMENT.

Mr. HUGHES (Bendigo—Prime Minister and Attorney-General) [11.3].—I move—

That the House do now adjourn.
In reply to the honorable member for Yarra (Mr. Tudor), let me say that my attention, being distracted for a moment, I was unaware that the honorable member for Perth (Mr. Fowler) had concluded his remarks, and so did not rise as I had intended immediately he had resumed his seat. Honorable members understand fully the significance of what occurred yesterday afternoon. I have been a member of the Parliament of New South Wales, and I have sat continuously as a member of this Parliament since its inception. My parliamentary experience covers a period of some twenty-seven years, but the vote of yesterday is to me without precedent. Members who have been in other Parliaments may have had a different experience. Let me remind honorable members of the circumstances. The honorable member for Grampians (Mr. Jowett) moved the adjournment of the House to call attention to a matter of urgent public importance, namely, the high oversea freights now ruling. Whatever our opinion may be of the matter brought before the House by the honorable member for the speeches of himself and other honorable members, it can hardly be contended that the Government is in any way responsible for high freights or that the motion was directed against the Government. It was alleged to be a friendly motion. It was so far a friendly motion that the honorable gentleman himself asked me to be

present in my place; and I paid him the compliment of being here and of preparing, as well as I could—seeing that I did not know exactly what he was about to say—something which bore directly on the matter to which he wished to direct the attention of the House and the country. I think he will agree with me that in anything I said there was no room for offence; and I certainly was under the impression that, in anything he said, both in regard to the Government and to the party which I have the honour to lead, there was no reflection, let alone any intention of censure.

Mr. JOWETT.—That is so.

Mr. HUGHES.—Very well. I followed the honorable gentleman, and having exhausted, and more than exhausted, the time allotted to me I went away. I returned to the chamber, and found, to my astonishment, that the motion which had been moved by the honorable member for Grampians, to call attention to a matter of urgent public importance, was being used as a means of taking the business out of the hands of the Government. If the honorable member had moved a motion complaining of high freights, and had suggested some practicable means by which these could have been reduced, I would have voted with him; but the honorable gentleman merely wished to call attention to a matter of great importance to the Commonwealth, but in which neither the Government nor the Parliament could take any effective action. As far as I was able to do so, I supported him, explaining the position as well as I could, pointing out the limits imposed upon ship-owners as well as upon everybody else by inexorable circumstances. The honorable gentleman had, by ventilating the matter, done all that was possible, and, having done so, it was not his intention to prevent the House proceeding to discuss other matters of great public importance, one of which permits of no delay. When, therefore, a division was called for and it was proposed to adjourn the House, I had no alternative but to vote as I did. The leader of the party to which the honorable member for Grampians is attached, and other honorable members with whom I discussed the matter subsequent to the division, gave me their personal assurance

had no intention of taking the business out of the hands of the Government.

Interruption.

Mr. HUGHES.—They have told me that some of them did not know what they were voting on.

Mr. HILL.—I think you should name them.

Interruption.

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. Sir Elliot Johnson).—Order! Will the right honorable the Prime Minister please resume his seat. The Prime Minister has already informed the House that he is suffering from a vocal disability. It is impossible for me to follow what he is saying while these numerous and concerted interjections are occurring. I ask honorable members, therefore, to restrain themselves, and permit the Prime Minister to make his remarks without undue interruption.

Mr. HUGHES.—I ask for the forbearance of the House. I am not well, and am trying to do my best. I am sorry that I cannot speak louder. I am endeavouring to put in some sort of chronological order the events which transpired in relation to the matter under review. I repeat that some of the members of the Country party assured me that they did not know what they were voting on, or, at all events, that they had no clear idea of the effects of their vote. I accept all these assurances, namely, that the motion was a friendly one, and was not intended as a reflection upon the Government, that the Country party did not call for a division, that members of the Opposition did so, and that honorable members of the Country party thereupon felt bound to support the motion which had been moved by a member of their party, the honorable member for Grampians. Of course, had some of those honorable members been a little more experienced they would have known that nothing is more common—

Interruption.

Mr. SPEAKER.—If honorable members persist in interjecting and in making concerted interruptions I shall have to take a different course of action.

HUGHES.—If honorable members give me a chance to speak, let me do so, and I will sit down. I hope if some members of the

Country party had had a little more experience they would have known that it is almost the invariable practice to negative a motion of the character in question, and not to support it. Such motions are not moved for the actual purpose of adjourning the House. They are an interruption of the ordinary programme of work set down on the business-paper for the day, in order to discuss some matter of urgent public business. I have myself often voted against motions which I have moved for the adjournment of the House when a vote has been called for, having obtained by the discussion thereon all that I had sought. And this frequently happens. No one knows better than the honorable member for Grampians that no vote of this House could reduce freights. If the Government were able, by some act of theirs, to reduce freights, and he had said, in effect, by his motion, "You must reduce freights," then a vote to ascertain the feeling of the House in regard to such a demand would have been quite proper. But such was not the case. The motion was moved in order to call attention—as I have said, and the honorable member for Grampians also has said—to a matter of grave importance, not only to the primary producer, but to the Commonwealth generally. These, then, are the facts: The motion was a friendly one. We are assured by several members of the Country party that they had no intention of embarrassing the Government; that they did not call for a division, but that, a division having been called for, those who were in the chamber felt bound to support the motion, while those who had been outside and came in to take part in the division sat alongside their colleagues. I think that fairly sets out the situation.

Having said so much, I want to ask honorable members, How do these facts affect the situation? It still remains true that the business has been taken out of the hands of the Government—

Mr. TUDOR.—And rightly so, too.

Mr. HUGHES.—Honorable members who have had any experience of parliamentary government know that that is the one thing which a Government cannot submit to.

Mr. WEST.—No respectable Government.

Mr. HUGHES.—I have no option, therefore, this morning but to move the adjournment of the House to enable the Government to consider the situation.

May I be permitted to say a word or two more? It is, in my opinion—and that opinion is supported by the measured and deliberate utterances of the Opposition and Country party—imperative that Australia should be represented at the Imperial Conference. It would be a most unfortunate occurrence if, as in 1917, a domestic crisis again prevented Australia from being represented. Perhaps we have more to lose now by the absence of a representative than we had even then. At any rate, we have too much to lose to take the risks of Australia not being represented. I think honorable members who wish their country well would consider it a calamity if, through anything falling short of that deliberate expression of lack of confidence in the Government which a vote of censure involves, the representation of Australia was made practically impossible. I am not going into the matter any further, excepting to point out what is very obvious. The sands of time are running out, and what has to be done must be done quickly. I ask any honorable member here whether, if he were in my place, he would be prepared to represent his country in London in view of the vote that was recorded—

Mr. CHARLTON.—I think the Government should resign on such a vote.

Mr. HUGHES.—Risking as he must every day the probability of an adverse vote.

Mr. GREGORY.—If the honorable member for Hunter (Mr. Charlton) is so "cocky," why does he not now move the adjournment of the House?

Mr. SPEAKER.—Order! Order!

Mr. HUGHES.—I was saying that I do not think any honorable member of this Chamber, if he were in my place, would be prepared to represent the Commonwealth in London and risk the probability of a vote such as was taken yesterday, not only involving humiliation upon himself, but rendering nugatory everything that had been done—or that had to be done—to enable Australia to be effectively represented. I ask any honorable member to put himself in my place, and consider what he would do.

Mr. WEST.—Most men would resign.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Order! The honorable member for East Sydney (Mr. West) is again out of order.

Mr. WEST.—I did not speak before.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Order!

Mr. HUGHES.—When in Cairo, I inspected the Sphinx, and wondered why it had been worshipped by mankind throughout the ages. I know now. It never says a word.

It is not merely an unwritten law, but an invariable practice, that no Government can carry on as if nothing had happened after an adverse vote had been recorded. There have been numerous instances where "snatch" votes have been taken; but in every such case that has been set right by carrying another motion. That has been the practice in every case so far as I know, and I can, of course, speak from a fairly lengthy experience. I ask the Leader of the Country party (Dr. Earle Page), or any man in a responsible position, whether he would continue to carry on as if nothing had happened when 12 or 13 honorable members, by allying themselves to the Opposition, had snatched the business out of the hands of the Government. The explanation is that they did not mean it. I accept the explanation without any reservations at all, that there was no such intention in the minds of the members of the Country party. The position, after that explanation, unless and until something is done to set it right, still remains the same. I look around this chamber, and this Parliament, as I have a right to do, and consider the position of parties. It is perfectly clear that when a party which consists of 38 members is challenged by two sections, which allegedly have nothing in common and who do not collectively, and certainly not separately, possess the numbers to carry on, the Government must, in the very nature of the thing, if it is to hold office with dignity and with due regard to its position in this House and in the country, take but one course in view of the vote which was recorded yesterday. I want to make my position quite clear. Not only do I not seek a crisis, but I am prepared to go as far as any man possibly can, with due regard to the dignity of the Government and of this party and the people it represents in the country, to avoid a crisis. But the representative of Australia at the conference in London must have behind a majority of this House. In

way can Australia be effectively represented at all. Apart then from other considerations, while there remains any doubt as to whether this Government has control of the business of this House, any attempt it may make to represent Australia at the Conference in London must invite, not merely the criticism, but the censure of every other section in this House, and of the great majority of the people of Australia.

The Leader of the Opposition asked a question, and I am sorry that he had to ask it.

Mr. TUDOR.—I was waiting for you to rise.

Mr. HUGHES.—I am sorry; but I have explained the matter. During my somewhat lengthy term of office I have appealed to the people on two occasions. The verdict of the people has been on each occasion clear and emphatic. The people certainly did give this party a mandate, clear and unmistakable, to govern this Commonwealth on certain well-defined lines. If honorable members would put party prejudice on one side, and seek to ascertain what is the desire of the people at this juncture, they would find that it is that Australia may be represented at this Conference. The Leader of the Country party (Dr. Earle Page) declared this in so many words, and I entirely agree with him. Because of that, the Government, though unable to ignore what took place yesterday, will seek an opportunity—and whether that opportunity is to be given depends entirely on the House—of ascertaining what the vote of yesterday meant. If, as honorable members assure us, it is not to be regarded as a vote of censure on the Government, or an attempt to take the business out of the hands of the Government, well, either by words or by action, that can be demonstrated. In the meantime, under the circumstances, I have no option but to move the motion—“That the House do now adjourn.”

Mr. TUDOR (Yarra) [11.34].—I am under no misapprehension as to what the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) means by his motion; and I am under no misapprehension as to what he expects to get out of it. He will put the “acid test” to members in the corner.

PARKER MOLONY.—It has been

Mr. TUDOR.—It has been put on some. There are others who indignantly deny that they had been brought up to the “bull ring,” and say that they intend to give their whole-hearted support to the Government, and promise the Government immunity from any adverse vote whilst the Prime Minister is away. I make no apology for asking the question I did.

Mr. HUGHES.—No apology is desired; I merely ask you to excuse the fact that, in consequence of my turning to my colleagues, I did not hear what was said.

Mr. TUDOR.—That is so. Mr. Speaker was going on with other business, and I took the only step I could to get a statement from some responsible Minister, preferably the Prime Minister. I make no apology for the vote of yesterday, nor for the call for a division. Such an occurrence is not, as the Prime Minister states, anything unusual, because we had a similar experience less than six months ago, on a Friday morning. The then Leader of the Country party (Mr. McWilliams) moved the adjournment of the House to consider the purchase of saw-mill and timber areas in Queensland; and the following is an extract from the *Hansard* report of what took place on that occasion:—

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—You are going to insist on a vote?

Mr. TUDOR.—I certainly think there should be a vote.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—After the speech of the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes), we ought to have a vote. I am willing that a vote shall be taken.

Mr. TUDOR.—Then, with the consent of the Government, I will move for an extension of time.

I was ruled out of order, and the Government were so keen against the extension of time that there was an incident in connexion with the division the like of which had never happened before. The Prime Minister then wanted to “put the acid” on as straight a man as ever sat in this Parliament—the honorable member for Hunter (Mr. Charlton)—and he said to that honorable member, “Charlton, if you vote for this I will not go on with the tribunal.” Every honorable member who was here on that Friday morning—the 10th September last—knows what took place. The Prime

Minister knew then that, if the extension of time were carried, the Government would have to take similar action to that taken this morning.

Mr. HUGHES.—That was quite a different thing—a motion for an extension of time is very different.

Mr. TUDOR.—Is it?

Mr. HUGHES.—The honorable member has been in Parliament a long time, though not so long as I have, and I ask him whether he has ever known anything like what took place yesterday?

Mr. TUDOR.—Yes.

Mr. HUGHES.—When?

Mr. TUDOR.—When you and I were members of the same Government.

Mr. HUGHES.—When was that?

Mr. TUDOR.—When Mr. Kelly, the then member for Wentworth, on the suggestion, probably, of the late Mr. Deakin, moved that the House adjourn, thus deliberately taking the business out of the hands of the Government. There were present on that occasion the honorable member for Darling Downs (Mr. Groom), the honorable member for Richmond (Mr. Greene), the honorable member for Grey (Mr. Poynton), the honorable member for Herbert (Mr. Bamford), and a few others.

Mr. GREENE.—That was an entirely different thing.

Mr. HUGHES.—The motion yesterday was for the adjournment of the House.

Mr. TUDOR.—And so was the motion on the 10th September.

Mr. HUGHES.—Nothing of the sort!

Mr. TUDOR.—Everything is entirely different that is not the same, I suppose. I know that the motion for the adjournment of the House is a means of "sudden death." We are told that if any member of the Country party or any member following the Government moves the adjournment of the House, it is to mean only so much "hot air"; no vote is to be taken. Good care is taken to talk out such motions, as I myself have experienced at the hands of the honorable member for Wide Bay (Mr. Corser). I have endeavoured, on three occasions, to deal with the question of the fixing of the price of sugar, but the honorable member mentioned always took good care that no vote was recorded; and a similar course will always be taken by honorable members who are interested keenly in the fate of the Government or

in the particular subject under discussion. I may say that I cannot credit one statement that has been made. The honorable member for Perth (Mr. Fowler), who has had twenty years' parliamentary experience, has said that he did not know which side he was voting on in the division yesterday.

Mr. FOWLER.—I did know, but I did not have an opportunity to get across.

Mr. TUDOR.—If the honorable member knew which side he was voting on, there are other members of the Country party who say that they themselves did not; and to me that is incredible. I can only say that if there are honorable members in that position, they should confess the fact to their constituents, and ask them to send others to represent them in Parliament. Earlier in my remarks I noted how few there are left of the members of the House of ten years ago, showing what an uncertain game politics is; and it is highly probable that ten years hence many more of us will be missing. The Government, apparently, are going to consider their position. The Prime Minister has told us that the sands of time are running out, and that he, or some other representative of Australia, should now be on his way to the Imperial Conference. I understand from the newspapers that he has booked his berth for the 27th inst.

Mr. HUGHES.—I do not want the honorable member to take the newspapers as his bible. If he wants any information, I shall be glad to supply it.

Mr. TUDOR.—I am not like the honorable gentleman, who, when he wished to expel the late member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Mahon), took the press reports of that member's utterances as his bible.

Mr. HUGHES.—I did not.

Mr. TUDOR.—There is no man in this Parliament who has less to thank the press for than I have.

Mr. HUGHES.—What have I to thank the press for? Can the honorable member tell me of one newspaper which supports me? If so, where is it?

Mr. TUDOR.—The whole lot of them support the Prime Minister at election times—certainly the whole of the newspapers in this State. I recollect that when I visited Bendigo I saw supplements issued with the newspapers there for the benefit of the honorable gentleman, supplements

his doings and showing what he was and where he was. The latter, of course, is a very difficult thing to determine in respect of political questions. The right honorable gentleman has told us that the sands of time are running out, and in order to expedite the transaction of business he has moved the adjournment of this House until Wednesday next. It is quite possible that the acid test has already been applied to certain honorable members of this Chamber, so that we shall be no further forward on Wednesday next than we are to-day.

Mr. CORSER.—The honorable member may be sent for before then.

Mr. TUDOR.—It would not be the first time that I have been sent for, though I have no doubt that it would be an awful calamity in the eyes of some honorable members opposite if an honorable member upon this side of the Chamber were sent for. But if my honorable friend who has interjected imagines that I have any anxiety in the direction indicated, he may disabuse his mind of the idea. If I am sent for, I shall certainly do my best in the circumstances, as I have always done. Doubtless the acid test has already been applied to certain honorable members who have affirmed that they voted yesterday in the way that they did by mistake. Let me quote from the *Hansard* proof of the speech delivered by the honorable member for Maranoa (Mr. James Page). He taunted the Country party that they would not take a vote upon the question. Thereupon the honorable member for South Sydney (Mr. Riley) interjected—

Mr. SPEAKER.—Order! The honorable member will not be in order in quoting the *Hansard* report of yesterday.

Mr. TUDOR.—Very well. The honorable member for South Sydney affirmed that the Country party would not take a vote upon the motion. The honorable member for Maranoa stated that he knew they would not, and thereupon the Treasurer (Sir Joseph Cook), who was the Minister in charge of the House at the time, declared that if they did not call a division upon it the Government would do so. He said that he was anxious to vote upon the question.

Sir ROBERT BEST.—What question?

Mr. TUDOR.—The question of the motion for adjournment which was moved here yesterday.

Sir ROBERT BEST.—No.

Mr. TUDOR.—The honorable member for Kooyong (Sir Robert Best) was not here. He missed the division.

Sir ROBERT BEST.—I did. I was outside the door of the chamber.

Mr. TUDOR.—It was the honorable member's duty to be inside the chamber door, and it is quite possible that the electors of Kooyong will want to know why he was not present when the division was taken. Of course, the Treasurer is not at liberty to alter an interjection in another member's speech and if we are to attach any importance to his words, he made the interjection to which I have referred. I was not present when the honorable member for Maranoa (Mr. Page) spoke upon the motion, but the Secretary of the Country party, Mr. Gibson, the honorable member for Wimmera (Mr. Stewart), and other honorable members admit that they heard the Treasurer make the statement which is recorded in *Hansard*.

Mr. WEST.—He said it all right.

Mr. TUDOR.—If that was the attitude of the Government, and if they did intend to call for a division upon the motion, why do they now object to that course having been followed?

Mr. HUGHES.—I give the honorable member my word that the statement as to the attitude of the Government is not true.

Mr. TUDOR.—The Treasurer was the Minister in charge of the House at the time, and he certainly made the interjection to which I have directed attention.

Mr. HUGHES.—Surely I am at liberty to speak for the Government, and I say that the statement is not true. I was told by the honorable member for Grampians (Mr. Jowett) that the motion was to be brought up for a definite purpose, and I prepared for it in order that I might help him, and help the object which he had in view. Nothing was further from the thought of the Government than to call for a division.

Mr. TUDOR.—The Prime Minister says it was not the intention of the Government to call for a division. But the Minister who was in charge of the House right up to the time that the vote was taken distinctly said that if the Country

party did not call for a division, the Government would do so. The statement is to be found in the *Hansard* report of the speech of the honorable member for Maranoa, and we can accept the *Hansard* report as an accurate one. I do not ask honorable members to accept my word for it. The Treasurer made the statement which is attributed to him in *Hansard*, and consequently the Government have no right this morning to kick up a row about the vote which was taken yesterday.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—The honorable member knows very well that the statement is ridiculous upon the face of it.

Sir GRANVILLE RYRIE.—A member of the Country party said that they would see that the motion was talked out.

Mr. JAMES PAGE.—We have you.

Mr. BLAKELEY.—Where is the Treasurer?

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honorable member for Darling (Mr. Blakeley) is out of order

Mr. TUDOR.—I have very little to add beyond saying that the interjection by the Treasurer puts an entirely different complexion upon the whole procedure of yesterday.

Mr. CORSER.—That is if he made it.

Mr. TUDOR.—There are several honorable members upon both sides of the chamber who heard him make it.

Mr. HUGHES.—Why, the *Hansard* report is the other way round.

Mr. TUDOR.—There is not the slightest doubt that the interjection was made and that it had reference to a division upon the motion for adjournment.

Mr. HUGHES.—Here is the Treasurer. Now let him speak for himself.

Mr. TUDOR.—When I have concluded my remarks, he will be at liberty to do so. He was in charge of the House when the vote was taken, and he said that if the Country party did not call for a division upon the motion, he would.

Mr. HUGHES.—The *Hansard* record says exactly the opposite of that.

Mr. BOWDEN.—The honorable member referred to talking the motion out, not to calling for a division.

Mr. TUDOR.—This motion certainly cannot be talked out, because every honorable member is at liberty to speak upon it for one hour and a quarter. The debate, therefore, may last all day. Evidently the Government find themselves

in a difficult position. Some of their alleged supporters are not so keen upon supporting them as Ministers appear to think. Nobody knows this better than does the Prime Minister; and if it were not for the hatred which they have of one party in this House the Government would have been shifted, not yesterday, but long ago. The Prime Minister cannot rely upon the support of an absolute majority of this Chamber to enable him to carry on the business of the country.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Upon a personal explanation I desire to say that the *Hansard* report of what occurred yesterday serves only to remind me once again of how a little badinage may appear in cold print. Honorable members know perfectly well that the honorable member for Maranoa (Mr. James Page) was, as usual, making himself very vocal yesterday afternoon, and amongst other things he taunted the Country party that their gun was not loaded and that nothing would come of the motion. According to the *Hansard* report, he said that the Country party would take good care that they did not get a division upon it, whereupon I am reported to have said that if the Country party did not take good care to have no division upon it we would do so.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—Does the Treasurer deny the accuracy of the report?

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Certainly not. It merely records a little badinage across the table. To attempt to erect that into a serious statement shows the straits to which the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Tudor) is reduced.

Mr. TUDOR.—We should get *Hansard* to insert alongside the interjection this explanation, "This is intended as a joke."

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Exactly. The honorable member for Maranoa (Mr. James Page) will not deny that the whole thing was a joke.

Mr. HUGHES.—The Treasurer said that he would take care that there would be no division.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—And that is that the *Hansard* report says. Will the Leader of the Opposition tell me he told the House during my

Mr. TUDOR.—I have repeated to the House exactly what the *Hansard* report says, namely, that the Treasurer said that if the Country party did not call for a division he would take care that there was one.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Having read the report in *Hansard*, I declare to the House that it contains not one word that justifies that statement. What the Leader of the Opposition has said amounts to unmitigated misrepresentation. The report states that I would do my best to prevent a division.

Mr. HUGHES.—Hear, hear!

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Does the Leader of the Opposition, after looking through the report, again persist in the statement he has made.

Mr. TUDOR.—I still say that, in my opinion, what I said is an accurate interpretation of the Treasurer's interjection.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—That we would see that there was a division?

Mr. TUDOR.—Yes.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Preposterous!

Mr. RILEY (South Sydney) [11.52].—I hope the House will give very serious consideration to the matter that is now before it. By vote yesterday the House declared that it had lost confidence in the Government. The Prime Minister has now proposed the adjournment of the House; no doubt the Government will carry the motion, and will then be quite safe. The Prime Minister has stated that no self-respecting Government could hold office after a vote had been recorded against them, but he and his Ministers must have a short memory. I remember that when they went to the country on the conscription question, the Prime Minister said that unless the referendum was carried the Government would not continue to hold office. Some Ministers stated that if the people rejected their proposal they would not retain office for twenty-five minutes. But when conscription was defeated what did this self-respecting Government do? They resigned, but said: "Please, Governor-General, send for us again." The Governor-General asked the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) whom he should send for to form a Ministry, and the Prime Minister replied: "Send for W. M. Hughes." And the same self-respecting Government retained possession of the bench. Last night, when some

newspaper reporters asked me what would happen as a result of yesterday's vote, I replied, "There is not a traction engine in the country that could drag the Government off the Treasury bench." What are the Government proposing now? The honorable member for Grampians (Mr. Jowett) yesterday moved a motion in all sincerity; he pointed out the shipping freight anomalies as a result of which the producers were being bled. He stated that the Shipping Combine were earning big profits and fleecing the producers, and that that was one of the reasons for high prices. What promise did the Government give to relieve the producers? They made no promise that they would try to bring about any reduction, and, accordingly, when the question was taken to a division honorable members of the Country party supported it. But I suppose the acid has been put on them this morning. Honorable members know that when a man purchases a piece of jewellery which is supposed to be 18 carat, and he doubts its genuineness, he tests it with acid. The Government are putting the acid on the Country party to-day, and if they do not stand the test—

Several honorable members interjecting,

Mr. SPEAKER.—Order! This disorderly conduct cannot be permitted to continue. There is a perfect babel of sound, and it is impossible for any honorable member to address the House without being subjected to unseemly interruption by loud conversation or continuous interjections. I ask honorable members to support the Chair in trying to keep some semblance of order in the conduct of debate; otherwise, our proceedings will be reduced to a farce. I hope the honorable member for South Sydney will be allowed to continue in reasonable silence, and that he will address his remarks to the Chair instead of to other honorable members.

Mr. RILEY.—The acid has been put upon the Country party in order to ascertain whether they were sincere in the action they took yesterday. If they retreat from the position they took up they will prove that they are "brummies," and the country will reject them. The Prime

Minister (Mr. Hughes) has stated that individual members of the Country party came to him, and said that they did not know what they were doing when they voted for the motion yesterday.

Mr. STEWART.—He did not name them.

Mr. RILEY.—He did not, and his statement is an insult to every member of the party.

Mr. JOWETT.—It is not.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Has not the honorable member for South Sydney voted many times without knowing what he was voting on?

Mr. RILEY.—The Treasurer must speak for himself. No doubt he has voted in ignorance on many occasions. The Prime Minister has tried to eulogize the Leader of the Country party, and has said that members of that party had told him that they did not know that the motion was loaded, and that they were friendly to the Government.

Mr. JOWETT.—He did not say that.

Mr. RILEY.—Will individual members of the party say that they did not approach the Prime Minister last night? Will they follow the example of the honorable member for Perth (Mr. Fowler)? The honorable member is like a jumping jack; at one moment he is against the Government and seeking an opportunity to defeat them, and then when the Government have been defeated he is the means by which the Government seek to show that honorable members did not understand the significance of their vote. I wonder what the people of Perth will say when they read the statement of the honorable member for Perth that when a division was taken he was talking to a journalist, and did not know what was happening. The division bells ring for three minutes; the honorable member is an old parliamentarian, and an ex-Chairman of Committees, and he must have understood the question. But now that he finds the vote has gone against the Government he is assisting to get them out of a tight corner.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—You have known of the same mistake a score of times in your experience.

Mr. RILEY.—I have not. The honorable member cannot make me utter an untruth in that way. I never knew, of

any case of that kind before. I trust that if politics in this country are going to have any honour, and if this Parliament is to command any respect from the people, the Government will take the only proper course open to them. When a vote has been recorded against the Government, and they have been defeated, the most manly course for the Prime Minister to adopt is to tender his resignation to the Governor-General, and let the Governor-General exhaust the possibilities of the House. This the Government did not do. Instead, there was conference after conference, and interview after interview, and buttonholing, and getting members of the Country party into a corner. It has been said before that the Government had the Country party "in the bag." They may have some of the Country party "in the bag," but I know members of that party who resent that sort of thing. It will go out to-day that the Country party are not sincere on the question of economy, and that they want an opportunity to keep the Government in power. It has been said that the Government have been handfeeding them, but I believe there are men in the Country party who are above that sort of thing. I honestly believe that the true expression of opinion of this House is against the Government, and that it has lost confidence in the Government.

Mr. JACKSON.—Nothing of the sort. The vote yesterday was not against the Government.

Mr. RILEY.—The honorable member ought to be keeping a lolly shop. I believe he is one of those who want to hold on to the Government, and keep them in office. I want the Government to face the position and resign. There are surely enough capable men in the House to form another Ministry.

Mr. JACKSON.—You do not want an election, do you?

Mr. RILEY.—I had a majority of 9,400, so that the prospect of an election does not affect me. The true duty of any self-respecting Government, when a vote goes against them, is to advise the Governor-General to send for some other member of the House to form a Ministry. In this case, the Leader of the Opposition should be first called. Look back to what the mem-

Government said when the last referendum on amendments of the Constitution was taken! They said they would not hold office if the referendum was defeated. The Treasurer (Sir Joseph Cook) was one of those who said that if the referendum was turned down he would not continue to govern the country for five minutes longer. But how did the Government cringe and crawl and twist about in order to remain on the Treasury bench? The fact is that, no matter what the vote of the House may be, you cannot get this Government to relinquish power. They have been too long there, and are too fond of the sweets of office. They are too full of intrigue to remove themselves from the Treasury bench. It is a disgrace to the country that we should have on the Treasury bench a Government who do not realize their responsibility as honorable men, and retire from office when a vote is given against them.

Mr. MAHONY (Dalley) [12.3].—I am rather astonished at two outstanding features of this matter. The first is the fact that the Government are still in office, and the second is that no explanation whatever is forthcoming from the Leader of the Corner party as to their action. It has been a well known practice of Parliament, ever since we have had responsible government, that the moment a vote is taken, which in any way takes the conduct of the business of the country out of the hands of the Government, the Government immediately resign. There is only one course dictated by honour, and that is the immediate resignation of this Government; but what do we find? Of course, if members in the Corner think so little of the honour of Parliament as to carry on loud conversations when a member is speaking, they should be told that before very long the people will wake up to the farce of the present parliamentary system, and give us some other system.

Mr. WATT.—I am afraid I was responsible for that incident. I beg the honorable member's pardon.

Mr. MAHONY.—The great outstanding fact, which must be recognised by all honorable men who form a Government, is that the moment the House takes the conduct of the business out of the hands of the Government, the only thing for them to do is to resign im-

mediately. The proper course for the Prime Minister to have taken yesterday was immediately to go to the Governor-General and tender his resignation, and not to indulge in intrigue, or endeavour by devious methods to hang on to office. What does it matter to the country who is in office, as compared with the importance of the honour of our public life and the integrity of our public men? All the Prime Minister's talk to-day about the members in the Corner not understanding their vote constitutes the most serious reflection possible upon the honour of those gentlemen. I believe they did understand their vote. I give them credit for understanding it. I am sure they knew sufficient of parliamentary procedure to know what the effect of their vote would be, and that they voted as they did yesterday, with their eyes open, to oust the present Government from the Treasury bench.

Mr. RYAN.—Then why do they not speak for themselves?

Mr. MAHONY.—I have commented on the remarkable silence of the members in the Corner. They sit there under the insults and taunts of the Prime Minister, and not a word of explanation comes from them. Will the honorable member for Grampians (Mr. Jowett) now tell us if he meant his vote to be taken seriously or not? Did he know what he was voting on? Did he know anything about the motion which he moved? I take his silence, and the silence of the Leader of his party, as indicating that the Corner party understood what they were doing perfectly well, and that they are prepared to accept the responsibility for their action. Surely we are not going to insult their intelligence by imputing to them ignorance of their own business! I think they did know their own business, and that they realized that the continuance in office of the present occupants of the Treasury bench is against the best interests of the people of Australia generally, and especially against the interests of the country producer. I believe that is the motive that actuated the members of the Country party in voting as they did to oust the Government. If the Government had done the right thing they would be out of office now, and the Governor-General would be asking the

Leader of the Opposition to form an Administration. The proper procedure is for the Leader of the Opposition to be sent for and commissioned to form a Government. It would then be for the Leader of the Opposition to tender his advice to His Excellency as to what, in his opinion, should take place. If, as a result of that procedure, an appeal to the people is precipitated, then let us have an appeal to the people and let the people be given an opportunity of expressing their opinions upon the conduct of the present Government.

Mr. HECTOR LAMOND.—Hear, hear! You may get that quicker than you want.

Mr. MAHONY.—I shall welcome an election far more than the honorable member for Illawarra does. There is no doubt about whether I shall come back. My majority is quite sufficient to insure that, but there is a big doubt whether the honorable member for Illawarra will come back. I can therefore quite understand his fear about a general election. I can imagine him holding up his hands in horror and saying to the Prime Minister, "For God's sake, do not send us to the country, because if we go to the country Illawarra will be lost to our party and go back to the Australian Labour party." There is no doubt that is the trouble, and undoubtedly there are a few other members behind the Prime Minister in a similar position. I wonder what the honorable member for Capricornia (Mr. Higgs) feels like to-day. I wonder what he had to say yesterday to the Prime Minister in the party room. I will wager that he said something pretty straight and pretty appealing to the Prime Minister about the condition of affairs in Capricornia. I can imagine that he drew the attention of the Prime Minister to the fact that the gentleman who is to be the next member for Capricornia was sitting in the public gallery yesterday. I refer to Mr. Ford. I suppose that the honorable member for Capricornia said, "Mr. Prime Minister, do any mortal thing you can, but for the Lord's sake do not send us to the country." Such intrigues for the purpose of holding office are a disgrace to public life; and if the people were given an opportunity of expressing their opinion upon them they would show their resentment at such conduct. This

Parliament should be above all such intrigues. I am prepared to allow any Government representing a majority of the people, and holding office in an honorable way, to continue without being hampered by anything of a paltry nature. But when we have a Government who throw honour overboard in order to hold on to office, the people should be given the earliest opportunity of displacing them. I ask honorable members of the Country party to stand as men to their own deliberate motion moved yesterday.

Mr. FLEMING.—There is no necessity for the honorable member to ask us to be men.

Mr. MAHONY.—Well, I am simply going upon the insinuations of the Prime Minister. He insinuated that he had been assured by the Leader of the Country party and many members of the party that they did not know what they were doing, and, if given the opportunity, would reverse their action of yesterday. Honorable members must recollect that they are public men with great responsibilities. They are sent here by a number of the people of Australia to stand firmly by the views to which they have given expression. If honorable members of the Country party have any hope of making anything of their party, I warn them to consider the position they will occupy in relation to the great masses of the people if one day they vote in one direction and next day they vote in an opposite direction. If they go back on their vote of yesterday, and, as a result, they go to the country, I give them this word of warning, that they will be shattered as a party, because there is nothing the people resent more than they do inconsistency on the part of public men. Honorable members may laugh, but we often laugh to stop ourselves from crying, and probably that is the position of the members of the Country party. If they go back on their vote, they are doomed to failure in public life. The only means any party has of making itself successful lies in integrity of purpose; it must stand solidly by its platform and the principles it has enunciated to the people. These are the only things which can make the Country party great. Hanging on to or to a seat in Parliament by trifles doom any party to failure.

Mr. CORSER.—I do not think that the honorable member wishes to see the Country party great.

Mr. MAHONY.—I am merely, in all sincerity, giving them a word of warning and advice, which surely they will permit from one who has at heart the general welfare of the community. In any case, my remarks are offered in a better spirit than were those of the Prime Minister. If any honorable member insinuated concerning me one-half of what the Prime Minister insinuated concerning certain members of the Corner party, I would rise immediately to resent it, and strongly at that. If the Country party wish to have any standing in the community they must stand solidly to their principles and be consistent, and if they give a vote they must stand by it.

Dr. EARLE PAGE.—We will stand by it.

Mr. MAHONY.—Presently the honorable member will be given an opportunity of standing by a vote, and I hope that he will do so. After yesterday's division it is regrettable that we have the spectacle of the Government still holding on to office, and the Prime Minister admitting that he is attempting to hang on by trickery and by intriguing with certain members of the Corner party, in an endeavour to get them to go back on their action. I hope that this will not be persisted in, and that we shall find that, at any rate, the great bulk of the members of the Country party are above such intrigues, being honorable and straightforward men.

Mr. RYAN (West Sydney) [12.17].—I am unable to apprehend the reason why the Prime Minister and his Government desire time to consider this situation. There was a very definite vote which took the business out of the hands of the Government yesterday afternoon by a majority of two. What need is there for consideration of the situation?

Mr. CONSIDINE.—The Government want time for bridge-building.

Mr. RYAN.—They want time to put the acid test on the Country party.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—And they will pass the test.

Mr. RYAN.—I hope they do. But the purpose for which I rise to say that it is due to honor-

able members generally that a responsible member of the Country party, after the statement made by the Prime Minister, and the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Tudor) should speak. The honorable member for Kooyong (Sir Robert Best) laughs. I can quite understand his laugh. He is not laughing at me; he is laughing at our honorable friends in the Corner.

Sir ROBERT BEST.—No.

Mr. RYAN.—Because now is the time and the only time for the Country party to make a statement to justify themselves in the eyes of the House and of the people. It will not do to come here on Wednesday next after there has been time for negotiations and then make a statement. The Prime Minister has said very definitely that the members of the Country party did not mean their action yesterday, and that there were several members of that party who did not know what they were voting on. He told us that the Leader of the party said that they did not mean it. I have a great personal respect for the honorable member for Cowper (Dr. Earle Page), the leader of the party, and I put it to him not as a warning or as advice, for it would be presumption on my part to offer either warning or advice to any honorable member, that unless a statement is made from the Country party to-day the people will form their own opinion upon the negotiations that may take place between to-day and when we meet on Wednesday next. The Country party either meant their vote and the consequences of it or they did not.

Mr. PROWSE.—There is a statement from members of this party published to-day.

Mr. RYAN.—Where?

Mr. PROWSE.—In the daily press.

Mr. RYAN.—The place for parties to make statements to the country is in this House—in the place where they vote. And, after all, the statement which I read in the press to-day was to the effect that the Government were responsible for the situation yesterday, because they did not continue the debate. What does that mean? When we analyze the statement, it means that, because no member on the Government side rose in his place to

talk the question out, members were accidentally placed in the position of having to cast their vote in this House. This corroborates the statement made by the Prime Minister that they did not mean it. It is due to the dignity of Parliament, and due to the people of Australia, that we should know whether or not our friends in the corner meant the natural and probable consequences of their vote, and I trust—it is in their own interests that I am saying this—that they will make some statement one way or the other. If they did not mean anything by their vote yesterday, we in this House, and the people outside, ought to know it.

I have said time and again in this House, and on the public platform in the country, that our friends in the corner are nothing more nor less than the tail of the Government party; that it is by reason of their support that the Government retain the reins of office. I have examined the division lists since this Parliament was constituted, and have found that in every crucial division the life of the Government has been saved by the votes of some of our honorable friends of the Country party. By accident, apparently, they voted yesterday afternoon against the Government. We have been told that they did not know the gun was loaded, that it went off accidentally; and the Prime Minister has now put them in a very humiliating position by saying that they had informed him they did not mean it.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—Who said that?

Mr. RYAN.—The Prime Minister.

Mr. STEWART.—Well, if we do not become a great party, it will not be for want of advice, at all events.

Mr. RYAN.—This is not advice. I am merely saying that the country expects members of the Country party here and now to make a statement. If they fail to take advantage of this opportunity, they must stand condemned and humiliated in the eyes of the people; because in their own presence the Prime Minister said that their Leader had told him they did not mean to embarrass the Government, and also that some of them did not know what they were voting on. Do they now sit silent under the lash?

If they remain silent, then all I can say is that they are not the men I take them for.

Mr. BRENNAN.—But some members of the Country party dissented from the Prime Minister's statement.

Mr. RYAN.—It is quite true, as the honorable member for Batman has interjected, that whilst the Prime Minister was speaking some members of the Country party interjected and individually denied his statement.

Mr. ANSTEY.—One man only.

Mr. RYAN.—This matter is very serious. It is lamentable that this morning there should have been a suggestion that the members of an entire party in this House are such babes in the wood that they do not know what they are doing; that they are handling firearms, not knowing they are loaded, and have allowed them to go off accidentally.

I want now to show the other side of the picture. The Treasurer (Sir Joseph Cook) undoubtedly gave this House to understand yesterday afternoon that if the honorable member for Grampians (Mr. Jowett) did not call for a division on this motion the Government would.

Mr. HECTOR LAMOND.—That is quite inaccurate, as the records show.

Mr. RYAN.—Well, if the honorable member for Illawarra says that, I shall leave the issue to the judgment of any disinterested and impartial individual who cares to read the *Hansard* report. I am satisfied that he can come to no other conclusion than that the Treasurer clearly gave the House to understand that, in the event of the honorable member for Grampians not calling for a division, he would.

Mr. BAMFORD.—But you know what a joker he is always.

Mr. RYAN.—I am aware that the Treasurer has put the matter in that light, but is the business of this Parliament to be treated as a joke? It seems to me that when Ministers get into a difficulty their explanation is that they were joking and did not mean it. And now we are told that the Country party did not know what they were doing. In order to able further to humiliate the Country party and to show them up in what conceives to be their true light, the Minister stresses the importan-

visit to the Old Country as the representative of Australia at the Imperial Conference. I do not want to trench at all upon any subject that may be on the business paper for that Conference; all I want to say is that, in my opinion, the majority of the people of Australia would not be displeased if the Prime Minister were not the representative of the Commonwealth at that important gathering, and the sooner the Prime Minister understands that the better. He is merely adopting a policy of gigantic bluff, and the way to meet him is to "call" his bluff. I am sure you will find the people of Australia behind us in that attitude. When the Prime Minister, with Sir Joseph Cook, represented this country at the Paris Conference we heard much about what he did for our White Australia policy, but when we examine the situation we find that he really handed over control of this policy to the League of Nations, an assembly that is not at all sympathetic with our ideals on that matter.

Mr. HECTOR LAMOND.—You are confusing what the Prime Minister did with what the Labour party wanted him to do.

Mr. RYAN.—Does the honorable member deny that the question of White Australia rests now with the League of Nations?

Mr. HECTOR LAMOND.—Yes.

Mr. RYAN.—If the honorable member denies what I say, then, it is useless to argue further with him. I declare, without fear of contradiction, that this important question has been handed over to the League of Nations. As proof of this, I point to the fact that one of the strongest objections by the United States of America to joining the League of Nations at all was that the question of immigration would be dealt with by the League. Therefore the United States of America representatives in Congress proposed to make a reservation—and in this they are backed up by the people of the United States—in favour of immigration being regarded as a domestic question. In the face of all the evidence as to what took place, and the written documents of the Paris Conference, the honorable member for Illawarra asserts that the question of a White Australia has not been handed over to the League of Nations. I say it has; and I

repeat that the majority of the people of Australia will not be disappointed if the Prime Minister is not our representative at the approaching Imperial Conference.

I hope honorable members will not be influenced, in anything they may do at this juncture, by the fear of an election. They, perhaps, fear that they will be charged with sacrificing the interests of the Empire if they do not make it possible for the Prime Minister to go to London to represent us at the Imperial Conference.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—Has the honorable member any justification for the statements he has made as to what our party is going to do?

Mr. RYAN.—I have said nothing as to what the Country party are going to do. I have been pointing out that the Prime Minister is asking for the adjournment of the House, in order that the Government may consider the situation. There is no need for an adjournment. The Prime Minister should be able at once to act, but in the course of his speech he has declared that the Country party did not mean to do what they did.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—That is not true.

Mr. RYAN.—He has pointed out that they did not appreciate what would be the natural consequence of the vote they cast. He has said that.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—That is incorrect.

Mr. RYAN.—The Prime Minister has made that statement, and our honorable friends of the Country party have remained silent. The honorable member for Franklin (Mr. McWilliams) has, by interjection, said that the Prime Minister's statement is not true; but would it not be much more satisfactory to have a statement from the Leader of the party? I put it in all good faith, and with the kindest of feeling towards my friends of the Country party, that a statement on their behalf should be made to-day. Any statement made by them later on will not have much value.

Mr. STEWART.—A statement will be made to-day.

Mr. RYAN.—I am glad to have that assurance. Such a statement will serve, at all events, to give the people of Australia some clear conception of what the actual position is. Having received that

assurance, I do not propose to do anything further.

Mr. STEWART.—I did not give it on behalf of the party.

Mr. RYAN.—I should like to have it from the Leader of the Country party. He knows his own business best, and I would not suggest that any one should dictate to him as to what he should do; but surely it is open to us, as a party, and as members of this House, to expect, when such definite and damaging statements are made—because the statements made by the Prime Minister were both definite and damaging—that those who are accused should tell us what their exact position is.

Mr. CONSIDINE (Barrier) [12.33].—If yesterday's incident, which we are now discussing, has not contributed to the progress of the country, it has at least added to the gaiety of the population. Having heard the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) in the course of his explanation, smoothing the road for the Country party—

Mr. STEWART.—So we are to get some more advice.

Mr. CONSIDINE.—No; not advice, but caustic comment. After noting the way in which the Prime Minister has carefully smoothed the path for the Country party to gracefully slide down, while at the same time paying them the doubtful compliment that they, like the honorable member for Perth (Mr. Fowler), were absent in mind, but present in body, and did not know what was likely to be the consequences of their vote, I am anxiously waiting to hear the reply of that party. The Prime Minister says that some of its members did not know for what they were voting. He makes that statement despite the fact that the honorable member for Grampians (Mr. Jowett), who submitted the motion which resulted in such disastrous consequences to the Government, was until recently the Deputy Leader of that party. The honorable member presumably was elected to that position because he was considered competent to judge what his party desired. We may, therefore, reasonably assume that he and those associated with him knew perfectly well what they were doing. I do not believe that they did not know. I think they knew what they were doing.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—They knew very well.

Mr. CONSIDINE.—And I think the Country party know what they intend to do. I am waiting to hear honorable members of that party make the announcement that as the result of a decision arrived at by them, the position created by yesterday's vote will be maintained to-day.

In reviewing the circumstances associated with the incident one is struck by the number of coincidences. One cannot help remarking, for instance, the phenomenal inactivity of the Government Whips, and also the phenomenal inactivity of the Treasurer (Sir Joseph Cook) who was leading the House at the time, and who is always so alert and anxious to see that adequate precautions are taken to properly safeguard the position of the Government. These facts almost lead one to believe that the Government were not averse to the creation of the situation which actually arose. The statement made by the Prime Minister does not lead to any conclusion that would destroy the hypothesis that the Government welcomed the opportunity to place the Country party in a position in which they would have to give the Ministry an assurance of continued support. The Ministerial party we know full well have been decidedly restive in view of the fact that if they are not to be supported by the Country party their majority has reached the vanishing stage. We are therefore driven to one of two conclusions—either that the Government were not unwilling that this situation should be created in order that they might profit thereby or that some of those who sit behind the Government, and who would not be averse to accepting a portfolio in a reconstructed Government in preference to going before their constituencies, had something to do with the little crisis. I do not know which of these assumptions is correct, but if we give the Country party credit, as I do, for being perfectly well aware of what they were doing, then that party must adhere to the position which they took up yesterday. If they do—if whole of the Country party, and merely the members of it who are present—give a vote in favour of

that given by them yesterday, then the Government must be defeated. If, however, as on former occasions, some members of the Country party are absent and unpaired when the division is taken, then the Government will retain its majority, and the Country party will have saved its face. I have been in the House on previous occasions when a similar situation has arisen. We have heard of an honorable member of the Country party who when the bells were ringing for an important division was in conference with Mr. Speaker in an ante-room, and did not hear them. We have heard of other honorable members of that party who were absent and unpaired when a division came along. The intriguing that has taken place on the opposite side of the House goes to show—and the honorable member for Perth is witness to the fact—that there is a disgruntled section in the Nationalist party who are not averse to the displacement of the Ministry, so long as the Nationalist party is not injured thereby. We know what happened in connexion with the motion given notice of by the honorable member for Perth (Mr. Fowler), but which met with a premature death. It was aimed at the displacement of the Government, but unfortunately it was not proceeded with.

Mr. HECTOR LAMOND.—In order that it might be done in a more subtle way.

Mr. CONSIDINE.—Then the honorable member does suspect.

Mr. HECTOR LAMOND.—I suspect some one.

Mr. CONSIDINE—I thank the honorable member for confirming my suspicions that there are honorable members on the other side willing to proceed in subtle ways to displace Ministers whom they are supposed to be supporting. According to reported utterances of the honorable member for Wimmera (Mr. Stewart), there are at least five members of the Nationalist party who are prepared to accept portfolios, and some attempt was made to put through a deal whereby five members of the Nationalist party and seven members of the Country party would divide the spoils of office. When we consider these things I am led to the conclusion that the event of yesterday was an unhappy accident, as some was premeditated, of malice

aforethought. I believe that the continuous session yesterday evening of members of the Country party and members of the Nationalist party was not without a purpose. Whatever may have taken place at that meeting, I do not think that a dissolution of Parliament will result. That is about the only thing upon which honorable members are likely to be unanimous.

Mr. MAHONY.—How is the honorable member's party on that question?

Mr. CONSIDINE.—My party is solid to put the Government out at the first available opportunity, and if the members of the party to which the honorable member for Dalley (Mr. Mahony) belongs are as solid on that point, and as closely devoted to duty, the Government may be removed from office. I know nothing of constitutional practice, but honorable members who possess knowledge on the subject have given us some crumbs of comfort by intimating that in the event of the adverse vote against the Government being maintained the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Tudor) must be sent for and given an opportunity to carry on the business of the country.

Mr. BRENNAN.—He has lots of good material out of which to form a Government.

Mr. CONSIDINE.—I can remember one occasion on which the members of a Government stood on their dignity and insisted that no self-respecting persons could continue to occupy Ministerial positions if the people turned down measures which they considered necessary for the good government of the Commonwealth and the maintenance of the Empire. But when the country did turn down their measures, although they resigned, they walked out through one door and came back immediately through another. On this historic occasion the honorable member for Grampians (Mr. Jowett) may be sent for, but should he not be sent for, and should the honorable member for Yarra (Mr. Tudor) be unable to secure support for a Government, it is possible that the honorable member for Cowper (Dr. Earle Page) may be called in to prescribe.

Mr. STEWART.—And, failing him, the Leader of the Fourth party may be called upon.

Mr. CONSIDINE.—Certainly; and if he is he will accept the invitation. It would be the first time I paid a visit to His Excellency, and, while I am not anticipating an early invitation, I can assure honorable members opposite that if they will consent to give me their support, I shall be prepared to give them eleven out of the twelve portfolios. The present situation, if not edifying, should be highly amusing to the country. The workers of Australia will take note of the intrigues that are resorted to by so-called statesmen in the effort to hang on to office and to avoid, as on one occasion the late Mr. Alfred Deakin described it, "being dragged screaming from the tart shop." It appears to me that when the possibilities of the situation have been exhausted we shall find ourselves in much the same position as before, with the possible exception that we may have a new Leader of the Nationalist party in the place of the present occupant of that position. There is a powerful section, the members of which wish to displace the present Prime Minister. Quarrels occur in the best regulated families, and we have had evidence from the honorable member for Perth that honorable members opposite are not a united family.

Mr. STEWART.—The honorable member would not call the Nationalist party a well regulated family.

Mr. CONSIDINE.—No more than I would so describe the party to which the honorable member belongs. We have evidence that certain interests desire to displace the present Prime Minister in his leadership of the Nationalist party. It may be that some dark horse is in the background, and that we shall have a new Prime Minister as a result of this intriguing and political manœuvring, but in the meantime the country is treated to the very unedifying spectacle of intriguing, counter intriguing, and pit digging by honorable members opposite in order that the Government may still cling to office, and that a pretence to unity may be put up in order that the people may be gulled, and last, but not least, that the exploiters may be represented at the Imperial Conference. The working classes in the present order of things will not be represented, no matter who goes. My vote will be given against the Government, and

against any who may succeed the present Ministers, if they follow the same lines of policy and voice the same interests. If the Country party listens to the blandishments of the Prime Minister, and allows itself to be tricked—

Mr. JOWETT.—What about the blandishments of the Opposition?

Mr. CONSIDINE.—I am not concerned with that. I have no desire and no reason to exercise any blandishments, and am rather amused at the spectacle with which we are now confronted. The Country party, like other parties, is trying to impress the electors that it is their members who are most concerned, first, with the interests of the primary producers, and, next, with those of the great mass of the people.

Mr. JOWETT.—We do not need to try to impress that upon the people.

Mr. CONSIDINE.—If the honorable member succeeds as well as he did yesterday, he will do very well. Should the Country party succumb to the blandishments of the Prime Minister, its political future may be aptly described by a slight alteration of lines from "The Burial of Sir John Moore"—

Little they'll reck if you leave them sleep on
In the grave where the Prime Minister has
laid them.

Mr. HECTOR LAMOND (Illawarra) [12.52].—It is to be regretted that in the heat of party conflict there should be repeated attempts to depreciate the services which our public men have rendered to their country, and I was sorry indeed to hear the honorable member for West Sydney (Mr. Ryan) speak as he did of the Prime Minister's efforts at the Peace Conference in the maintenance of the White Australia policy.

Mr. RYAN.—He handed the White Australia policy over to the League of Nations.

Mr. HECTOR LAMOND.—I have more than once had occasion to comment on the failure of the party with which the honorable and learned member is associated to appreciate the importance of Australian representation at the Conference of 1917. It was due to that party's action that the Prime Minister was prevented from presenting the White Australia policy to an Imperial Conference before the holding of the Peace Conference, and many of his subsequent difficulties were caused thereby.

purely personal reasons that he was prevented from attending the 1917 Conference.

Mr. BRENNAN.—We object to him attending any Conference as our representative.

Mr. HECTOR LAMOND.—Personal spite rather than political reasons kept him from attending the 1917 Conference; but, notwithstanding the difficulties in the way of a full and effective presentation of the White Australia policy at the Peace Conference, due to the Labour party's want of recognition of the importance of having Australia represented at the Imperial Conference in 1917, the Prime Minister, against odds that would have deterred a man of lesser calibre, wrested victory from those who were determined that he should not succeed, and from a majority who would have nothing to do with the White Australia policy. Whatever may be the verdict of posterity on his work at the great Peace Conference, those who consider that the White Australia policy is essential to the maintenance of the Commonwealth as a white man's country must acknowledge that he succeeded there, even beyond the expectation of his most ardent friends.

Mr. RYAN.—He succeeded in handing the White Australia policy over to the League of Nations.

Mr. HECTOR LAMOND.—That statement is a singularly inaccurate one for a member of the legal profession to make. The mandate which the Minister for Repatriation (Senator E. D. Millen) was able, as the Australian representative, to bring back from the Geneva Conference, in spite of the assistance given to Japan by some of the members of this House, and the almost insuperable difficulties of his position there, permits this Parliament to apply to the new territories of the Pacific which we now control the same legislation as we have enacted for the government of our own country. It is not necessary, as the honorable member for Hume (Mr. Parker Moloney) suggested, that we should pretend to a knowledge of what has taken place in the secret conclaves of the Labour party, to know its attitude on this question. That was published officially throughout the Commonwealth the direction to those who sat on the other side of the world,

that its policy regarding the Pacific possessions was that Australia should have no more voice in regard to them than belonged to any one of the representatives of the nations. To-day, the party wishes Australia to forget this official notification of policy. It can be easily understood that its members should wish the electors to forget their treachery to the White Australia principle at the time when that principle most needed the help of those who now profess to be its chief champions. For a member of a party, tainted as it is with treachery to the White Australia principle, to upbraid the Prime Minister for failure to defend that principle at the Peace Conference, is for him to make too great a demand on the intelligence of the Australian Democracy. Instead of the honorable member for West Sydney seeking to take from the Prime Minister the laurels that he won at the Peace Conference, in his fight for a White Australia policy, the honorable and learned member would have better served the interests of those who sent him here had he given the right honorable gentleman the fullest support, so that the victory already secured might not be jeopardized by the want of similar representation at the forthcoming Imperial Conference. It is humiliating that, at a time when the future of this country is in the balance, and it is essential that Australia should present a united front in defence of her ideals, the selfish interests of political parties should be permitted to override the interests of the Commonwealth. I deplore the position brought about by yesterday's vote. It must, however, be viewed from the constitutional stand-point. My object in rising was to denounce attacks on the Prime Minister based on the assertion that, at the Peace Conference, he failed in his duty to Australia in his attitude towards the White Australia policy. We did not secure all that we wanted, but we should have secured perhaps more than we did, had the right honorable gentleman had behind him the national support that was given to the delegates of every other country. It is to be admitted with shame that, in this country alone, there was a section which reviled its representatives at the Peace Conference, and took every opportunity to weaken their influence with those with whom they were dealing.

Sitting suspended from 1 to 2.15 p.m.

Mr. HECTOR LAMOND. — Whatever may be the merits of the vote of the Country party yesterday, the Labour party, at any rate, cannot escape the obloquy of having for the second time done its utmost to prevent the presentation of the case for a White Australia at an Imperial Conference.

Dr. EARLE PAGE (Cowper) [2.18]. — I was asked last night by various pressmen who thronged these precincts whether the present situation was to be regarded as a major or a minor crisis. And, this morning, practically all over Australia, we find that every journal of any significance is suggesting that a mountain is being made out of a molehill. What has taken place is that the Government have made a definite blunder in tactics, and are now trying to force the whole of the blame for their palpable error on the shoulders of this party. I take exception to the attitude and to the statements of the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes). I have heard statements made by him to the effect that yesterday's was a snatch division, and that the voting was not very well considered by any honorable member because of its suddenness. I deny that any member of the Country party has said that he did not know what he was voting for.

Mr. HUGHES. — What I did say was that some members of your party, who were not in the chamber, voted when they did come in, not knowing at the time what the motion was.

Dr. EARLE PAGE. — Now we find that the Prime Minister is using this vote, for which the Government must be held responsible, as a means of bludgeoning a further assurance from this party, which it cannot give with any retention of its self-respect.

Mr. HUGHES. — Quite wrong!

Dr. EARLE PAGE. — This party is not the wet-nurse of the Government. We are not responsible for the present position. We have no intention of giving the Government—nor could we give this or any other Government—absolute immunity. To do so would be inconsistent with our pledges to our constituents. But, as we have said, we will not take any undue advantage of the absence of the Prime Minister. We cannot be expected, however, to do the Prime Minister's whipping for him, and everything else in connexion with the running of

this House. We think, and have expressed the view, that Australia should be represented at the Imperial Conference. I have spoken in no uncertain terms regarding that; and the ideas of the Prime Minister, as he has expounded them here, have received the almost unanimous support of all parties in this Chamber. If the Government are not prepared to take the full responsibility of being represented at the Conference, it is time that a Government came into existence which would be prepared to accept complete responsibility, and would represent Australia there. The Prime Minister has quoted my views with respect to patching up party quarrels; but what is the right honorable gentleman now doing? He is flogging his Imperial mission for purely party advantage. The Prime Minister has taken the proper course to-day in asking for time in which to reconsider his position. He has been given a definite statement concerning our views, and I will vote for the adjournment for which the Prime Minister has asked, in order to enable him to give the required consideration to his position.

Mr. BLAKELEY (Darling) [2.24]. — It is extremely interesting, in view of what the Leader of the Country party (Dr. Earle Page), has just said, to examine the position in which the Government now find themselves. They have been defeated; but, notwithstanding that, and the fact that we have had from the Leader of the Country party an assurance that every member of his party understood the significance of yesterday's vote, and knew the seriousness of their step, and exactly what they were doing, we still see the Government clinging, limpet-like, to the Treasury bench. It should not take them twenty-four hours, or twenty-four minutes, to decide what course they should adopt. Personally, I think that the only honorable procedure is for the Government to immediately hand their resignations to the Governor-General, and so let His Excellency send for the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Tudor), who would form a Ministry, and endeavour to carry on. In ordinary circumstances, with ordinary people, such a course, no doubt, would have been last night. But this is no ordinary government. It is an extraordinary government, consisting of a remnant,

individuals, who, no matter what may be brought against them, no matter what the position in which they may find themselves, still hold on. The question has been asked whether, if the Government were defeated by ten on a straight-out want of confidence vote, they would even then hand in their resignations. We have had the spectacle of the Government going to the country and promising the people that if they did not receive a mandate they would refuse to carry on. They said that they would not attempt to do so for twenty-four hours if the people refused to give them their support. But they are still carrying on the administration of the affairs of this country under most unusual circumstances. Almost every week a crisis occurs, in which the Government are threatened, but immediately the whips are cracked intriguing and underground engineering commence. This House has been one mass of intrigue, not only in this, but in the last Parliament, to enable the Government to retain their seats, but not their honour, as that has gone long ago. Of course, I am not speaking of the members of the Government individually, but of the Government as a Government. Last night the vote was on a clear-cut issue, and the Government could not maintain their position and control the House. They lost control of the business which it was their duty to perform, as a majority of this Chamber, in no mistakable language said, "We are taking control." In ordinary circumstances, a Government should, without any intrigue or the sending of messengers hither and thither, have immediately sent in their resignations to the Governor-General. Personally, I believe that the Labour party could not carry on the government of the Commonwealth, although there is no doubt as to our capacity to administer its affairs. We have not the numbers, and we could not expect the Country party for one moment to support us. The only difference between the members of the Country party and those supporting the Government is that the former are more conservative. In such circumstances, it would not be long before a new Administration would be demanded and there would then be only one and that would be for us to decide. That is the pro-

cedure which should be followed and which must be adopted if this Parliament is to maintain its dignity and traditions.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—Is not that a matter for the Governor-General?

Mr. BLAKELEY.—It is not my desire to usurp the powers of the Governor-General, but apparently these rudimentary facts must be stated in this House to bring us to our proper position. It does not seem to be a question of the honour of the Government or the proper procedure to be adopted, but merely one of considering the perquisites and privileges of office. I can only repeat that the Government have only one duty to perform, and that is to resign. Apparently the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) is more perturbed concerning his trip to Great Britain than he is in regard to the fate of the Government, and their position, for the time being, is secondary to that of his visit to Great Britain. As to the significance of that, we shall learn later, when we ascertain whether he is returning to the Commonwealth or not. Those on this side of the Chamber, representing more than one half of the people of the Commonwealth, are of the opinion that the Prime Minister should not leave Australia, because we do not think he is a fit and proper person to represent us.

Mr. CONSIDINE.—I do not agree with the honorable member when he says that the Prime Minister should not leave Australia.

Mr. BLAKELEY.—I am against the deportation of any citizen from Australia, including the Prime Minister.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—Not without a trial, anyhow.

Mr. BLAKELEY.—The Prime Minister does not represent the aspirations of this country, and has not done so for some years. He represents the views of a minority in the community, and we are not prepared to give him full and complete power to enter into financial arrangements of an Imperial character. We are not, for instance, in favour of the right honorable gentleman binding us to subsidize an Imperial Navy, and as a matter of fact we are not at all agreeable to him going abroad on behalf of the Commonwealth, because we do not

think that he is temperamentally fitted to represent Australia. The Government have a duty to perform to the Parliament and to the people of the Commonwealth, and that is to resign at the earliest possible moment.

Mr. RYAN.—They might be dismissed.

Mr. BLAKELEY.—We can only dismiss them by a vote of this House.

Mr. RYAN.—The Governor-General can.

Mr. BLAKELEY.—Irrespective of how this vote goes it will not have the slightest effect upon the Government, because they are determined to carry on.

Mr. TUDOR.—To hang on.

Mr. BLAKELEY.—I will accept the correction. I trust that when the assurance which is asked for is renewed—not to-day, but on a subsequent occasion—that this House will give a vote similar to that recorded yesterday.

Mr. ANSTEY (Bourke) [2.33]:—I am somewhat like those engaged in military occupations, and who have had military training, but who, although not anxious for bloodshed, are prepared to follow the path of duty. I am not willing to enter upon a campaign of slaughter; but I am prepared to do my duty even if it involves the necessity of an election. The situation which has arisen in this Chamber illustrates the absurdity of party government. Here is government of the people by the people and for the people. In theory a majority of the representatives of the people have dominated the situation, and dictated a policy; but in actual practice the people are controlled by a comparatively few men who happen to be members of the Cabinet. There is no freedom for those who happen to be in opposition, or those who sit behind the Government, who are tossed like corks in the stream of public life, and are following the dictates of a man who is a member of the Cabinet, and who, by the grace of God, happens to be the Prime Minister at this moment. Here, we see a gentleman like the honorable member for Grampians (Mr. Jowett). He represents no particular party; he is neither fish, flesh, nor good red devil; he belongs to neither one side nor the other. He does not wish to be identified with the extreme policy of the Labour party, nor with the policy or responsibilities of the Government. Standing

between the two parties—between the Government and the Opposition—these people in the Corner expect to float on the stream of public life, identified with the responsibilities and policies of neither. The object of the honorable member for Grampians is to keep in view of the public; he has a message, but he does not wish to give it in the interests of the public or of anybody except himself. He wishes, however, to be on the right side, and so he goes to the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes), and says, "Old man, do not worry; I do not mean to hurt you, but, by Christ! I must keep myself on top." And so he submits his motion, deliberately compromising himself in every way in regard to principles and conscience; he hypocritically moves a motion in which he does not believe; and, in order to keep himself in the public eye and establish himself in his own constituency, he whispers to the Prime Minister, "I want to occupy the time of the country for two hours; but do not worry, I do not mean anything." Honorable members see the situation which arises. Those men in the Corner do not mean anything, and they wish to ignore any responsibility in regard to the Government. Every man who honestly sits behind the Government takes his fortunes in his hand; for good or evil, he takes the risk of the battle. He is on one side or the other; and, even if he cannot believe he is right, at least he stands by the Government and shares in its responsibility. But where do the members of the Country party stand? Not here, not there, not anywhere. What are they in public life? What do they stand for? Where is their manhood and sense of decency? The Prime Minister can come here and say to the honorable member for Cowper (Dr. Earle Page), "You say that you and your party do not mean anything; what in the name of God are you here for?" What, I ask again, do the members of that party stand for? For the Government? No. Against the Government? No. For the Labour party? No. Against it? No. They stand for nothing—only for themselves. The Prime Minister can stand here and talk in any way he has to the representative of a party without principles, with

without ideas, prepared to stand for nothing, and to desert everything; to support one thing one day and oppose it the next; to stand up or sit down as the exigencies of the moment demand. The Leader of this party can afford to be insulting to the Prime Minister of this country. What does the Prime Minister do? The Prime Minister says to this Leader, "You deny responsibility, and say that you did not mean anything." Does the Leader of the Country party stand up to reply? Does he answer the accusations of the Prime Minister? Not at all; he accepts the imputation that he did not mean anything; he accepts this slander on his character, and, like a poor helpless creature, does not attempt any answer. All he does is to say, "As we are the Country party, if a motion for the adjournment of the House is moved by one of us, I will support it." The party reserve the right to turn round and vote against or for the Government as they please. What has the Prime Minister said about other members of the party? The right honorable gentleman says to them, "You come to me privately, and whisper to me that you did not know what you were voting for." However, there is nothing in that. They are not the only men who vote and do not know what they are voting for. In the history of this Chamber members have walked in and voted for something—they knew not what. I honestly admit, without mentioning names, that there was, at least, one member, apart from the Country party, who did the same thing.

Mr. GIBSON.—You are not the only one. I asked eleven honorable members opposite what they were voting for and not one man knew.

Mr. ANSTEY.—I quite agree with the honorable member; it has occurred many a time. But the public does not know what goes on, and the press will not expose the game. The public will swallow the "dope," and will really believe that we assemble here, and know what we are voting for, though very often we do not. The Prime Minister seeks to score on that point, and says of those men in the other place, that some of them whispered to them, "they did not know what they were voting for—that they never meant

any harm, but that, of course, they wanted to appear well before the public and their constituents. The last thing they wished to do was to embarrass the Government or themselves. One would, at least, think that private conversations should be sacred.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—Hear, hear!

Mr. ANSTEY.—The honorable member says, "Hear, hear!" but he and the others with him do not resent this repetition of a private conversation. They go to the Prime Minister as a kind of father confessor, saying, "Oh, father, forgive us, for we know not what we do." They do not resent this violation of a private conversation. No; they are deadly silent, and dare not answer. What sort of animals are they who dare not resent an imputation of the kind? Why do they not stand up one by one and answer the Prime Minister? It is neither the Government nor the Opposition that is on its trial in the Government's estimation; it is that section in the Corner which claims to be free from the responsibilities of the Government, and also free from the extremism of the Opposition. What does the Government do? I do not object to the attitude of the Prime Minister, inconvenient as it may be to myself and others. It is the only attitude that the right honorable gentleman could adopt towards a faction like this. It would be better for the future of the country if the Country party were to link up with either one side or the other rather than maintain a position where nobody can trust them. Why, they cannot even trust each other! What honour is there in being the leader of such a party or faction? They sit here and, with tame submission, listen to the abuse of the Prime Minister—to his imputations, his insults and innuendoes, and to the stigmas cast on them from this side.

Mr. GREGORY.—Is this Satan reprob ing sin?

Mr. ANSTEY.—Sure! It is not the first time that he has done it in this Chamber. Was it not the honorable member himself who said, a little while ago, to an honorable member upon this side of the House, "You move the adjournment of this debate and see where we are"? I would like to adopt that

course now, and to know where the honorable member is. But I will guarantee that if it comes to a toss-up there is only one side upon which he will come down—the side necessary to placate the Government.

Mr. GREGORY.—At the present time, "Yes."

Mr. ANSTEY.—I knew it. As a result, the Country party unnecessarily occupied the time which was spent in discussing the motion for adjournment brought forward yesterday. Honorable members on this side of the Chamber were not the wasters of public time. It was the members of the Country party who occupied the time of Parliament in debating a motion which meant nothing, and in respect of which they have harmed themselves considerably in the eyes of the electors. Even if we had been as hypocritical as they themselves, the members of the Labour party were bound to vote against the Government. We had to do so, or to disappear from public life as its supporters. But gentlemen who occupy the position that is occupied by members of the Country party have neither the respect of any Government supporter nor of any member of the Opposition, nor of the daily press of this country, whether it be Labour or Liberal. They cannot command the respect of any large body of citizens, who hold definite opinions, either one way or the other. If they have a clear-cut policy which is for the good of the Commonwealth, they have a duty to the country and to themselves. That duty is to seize the opportunities which come to them from the struggles of the two main factions, and to put their political fortunes to the test, believing that, if their policy is the best one, the country will support them. As a party, they can never have a political future if they continue to remain as indefinite in their attitude as they have been since their advent in this Chamber. Coming to the threat of a dissolution, I have always endeavoured to postpone, as far as possible, a general election. I would postpone it for all eternity. But, apart from personal inconvenience, it stands to reason that we, as a party, are hostile to this Government; that we are hostile to its Prime Minister, and that we are naturally hostile to his going to England, upon the ground that the policy which he has enunciated upon the floor of this Chamber is

inimical to the best interests of Australia. The inference founded upon the arguments of the Treasurer himself (Sir Joseph Cook) is that this country cannot bear a heavy burden in respect of naval expenditure. If the Old Country is loaded up with an enormous debt, if she is torn by internal dissension, and by international dissatisfaction with her previous allies; if it is inevitable that the revenues of this country must decline enormously within the next twelve months whilst our interest burden must increase, it is not the willingness either of the Prime Minister or the Treasurer which will dictate the future policy of this country in regard to our naval defence. What will dictate it is the state of its finances and the ability of the Commonwealth to bear the expenditure. The Prime Minister has asked why the Old Country should defend Australia.

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. Sir Elliot Johnson).—I must ask the honorable member not to discuss, upon this motion, the Ministerial statement.

Mr. ANSTEY.—Just when I was in the mood I could not speak at all, and now that I can speak I am prevented from doing so. But, however willing some honorable members may be to stop me talking, I know that you, sir, would be the last person to intervene if you could avoid it. However, there will be no more talk from me upon the naval question. If the opportunity is afforded me upon a future occasion, I shall say why this country should not be represented at the Imperial Conference except in conformity with views which have been clearly promulgated by this Parliament. I repeat that it is inevitable that the party with which I am associated will vote against the Government upon every conceivable occasion. I do not believe that there is going to be any dissolution of this Parliament. I believe that the anxiety of the Prime Minister to appear in England during the coming summer season is a paramount reason why there will be no dissolution. Of course, if a dissolution should come, I shall have to face it with the others, irrespective of its results. But I do not believe that it will come. What is going to happen is that the gentlemen who sit upon the corner benches are going to be brought to heel, and they will give a promise

Government of clear and definite support, so that what has hitherto been known as the Country party will disappear from the public life of the Commonwealth.

Mr. STEWART (Wimmera) [2.52].—I am doing the honorable member and his irresponsible remarks—

Mr. ANSTEY.—Will the honorable member permit me to make one remark by way of interjection?

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. Sir Elliot Johnson).—Order!

Mr. ANSTEY.—I wish to make a personal explanation.

Mr. SPEAKER.—That cannot be done in the middle of another honorable member's speech.

Mr. STEWART.—I desire to say a few words, not merely in reply to the honorable member for Bourke (Mr. Anstey), but in reply to other honorable members upon the same side of the chamber. I wish to thank them for the advice which they have been giving us all the morning. They have been so busy in that direction that the members of the party with which I am associated have not had an opportunity of even getting a word in. Now that we have a chance to do so, I thank them for the advice which they have given us. Frequently, when issues have arisen here, they have filled pages of *Hansard* with statements to the effect that a majority of members of the Country party have invariably saved the Government. We have had speeches from them in which my own party has been sternly denounced in this connexion. But yesterday a vote was taken upon a formal motion for adjournment, and the Government were defeated. Yet we still have speeches condemnatory of the Country party by honorable members opposite! What did the honorable member for Bourke say? He said that the political policy of his party was to be "agin the Government." Irrespective of whether the Government are right or wrong, its policy is to oppose them. That is the political creed of honorable members opposite. They are against any motion which may emanate from the Ministerial side of the House, whether it be right or wrong. The supporters of the Government hold a somewhat similar political creed in respect of opposition. They are opposed to any

motion which may come from that quarter, be it right or wrong.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—That is not true.

Mr. STEWART.—When pairs have been required what has been the experience of the party in this corner of the House? Frequently we have experienced difficulty in getting them. But there has been no such difficulty experienced either by Labour members or Ministerial supporters. And it is not difficult for an individual member of this party to get a pair. Why? Because when an honorable member desires to go away, he says to the Whip, "Get me a pair against the Labour party." No matter what the issue before the House may be, he desires to be paired against the Opposition.

Mr. RYAN.—With which side would the honorable member pair?

Mr. STEWART.—Whichever side was, in my opinion, acting in the best interests of Australia.

Mr. JAMES PAGE.—Has the honorable member ever been refused a pair?

Mr. STEWART.—I have.

Mr. JAMES PAGE.—Not by me.

Mr. STEWART.—I do not know by whom. What is the reason for the presence of the Country party in this House? We are regarded as intruders. Why? Because we have spoilt the little two-party game that has been played in this country for so long. Neither of the old parties likes a third eleven in the field. We are about as welcome to honorable members on this side of the House as we are to those on the Opposition side. It is quite true, as the honorable member for Bourke (Mr. Anstey) said, that it is a case of "the survival of the fittest"; we shall have to fight, and I am prepared to fight and stand to my guns for the ideals of the people who sent me here—the organized farmers of Australia. The people of the out-back, the men and women who are making the country what it is, have had experience of the rule of the Labour party, and, particularly during the last few years, of rule by the party at present in power. And what was the result of the last election?

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—Does the honorable member mean the election in South Australia?

Mr. STEWART.—The Country party in South Australia succeeded about as well as did the Labour party.

Mr. TUDOR.—No; we won sixteen seats, the Country party none.

Mr. STEWART.—That is so, but I am not referring now to State politics; I am dealing with the Federal Parliament, and I say that, in spite of experience of government by the Labour party and by that party which to-day calls itself National, which previously called itself Liberal, and which in the next few years will call itself God knows what, the people returned the Country party to this House. We are here, and, take it from me, we shall stay.

With reference to the crisis that has arisen, the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) stated that certain members of the Country party went to him and said that they did not mean to vote as they did, or that they did not mean that vote to be interpreted as it has been. I do not know what they said, but I, at any rate, did not go to him. Furthermore, if I were Prime Minister, and any honorable members told me what members of our party are alleged to have said to the Leader of the Government, I would not have come here and disclosed their statement on the floor of the House. I would not have put in a false position somebody who was probably sympathetically inclined towards me. If I spoke privately to the Leader of the Opposition or to almost any other member in the House, I would feel quite certain that my statement would not be repeated here, as the Prime Minister repeated statements made to him, not only to members of this House, but to the press and people. The action of the Prime Minister was deliberately unfair to the very people who, he claims, are sympathetic towards the Government.

Mr. CHARLTON.—The honorable member does not know what the other honorable members said to him, or what use they told him to make of their statements.

Mr. STEWART.—They may have said a great deal more or a great deal less; I do not know what they said. I have only to say, speaking, not so much for the Country party, but rather for the people who sent us here, particularly the organized farmers of Victoria, that the reason why we were returned to Parlia-

ment was the failure of both existing parties. And I make bold to say that for that same reason we shall stay here. We were returned upon a definite platform, which is stated in black and white. Candidates from both the old parties were pitted against us on the hustings, and the only results were a diminution of the numbers of both of them and an increase in the strength of the Country party. Yet honorable members have the effrontery to sneer at a party which has won its position in this House in spite of the efforts of both of the other parties. I repeat that we are here to stay.

Mr. LAZZARINI (Werriwa) [3.2].—It seems to me that we are going through a stage when responsible government and parliamentary institutions are being placed on trial. We hear a lot from our opponents about honorable members on this side of the House desiring to destroy parliamentary government. If there is anything calculated to destroy parliamentary institutions it is disgraceful procedure such as we witnessed yesterday and to-day. Nothing could tend more to bring parliamentary institutions and constitutional government into contempt with the people than the action of the Government in hanging on to office after this House has clearly told them that it has lost confidence in them and their administration. I shall not say much in regard to the controversy or trial of wits between the Prime Minister and the Country party, or the insults and innuendoes that he has directed at them. If the honour of the Country party is concerned, that is their look out; the affairs of my own party are sufficient concern for me. I shall not worry whether the Country party loses or gains, or whether they support or oppose the Government. Whatever action they take must be their own responsibility, to which they, and not we, will have to stand up. I desire to refer briefly to the laboured reason which the Prime Minister gave for the undignified attitude of his Government in hanging on to office. He said that it was essential that Australia should be represented at the Imperial Conference—inferentially, by him. Australia could still be represented at that Conference even if the Government were to resign to-day, but not by the present Prime Minister. Apparently, he is of opinion that

Australia cannot be adequately represented except by himself. The opinion of myself and the other members of the Labour party is that anybody could represent Australia at the Imperial Conference better than the Prime Minister. I believe that if the people outside could express their opinion they would support that view. The country is not looking with any great amount of anxiety to its representation by the Prime Minister at the Imperial Conference. I believe a great deal was said here to-day about his representation of Australia at other Conferences. The statement that he consented at a previous gathering to the White Australia policy being handed over to the League of Nations has been contested, but I think that it is clear and beyond dispute that he did do so. If such a policy as that, a policy so vital to the interests of Australia, could be handed over by him to the League of Nations, we have no guarantee whatever, irrespective of the statements that the Prime Minister has made to the House, that other interests as vital, or nearly as vital to Australia, will be conserved by him.

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. Sir Elliot Johnson).—I ask the honorable member not to discuss that matter, which is involved in the Ministerial statement.

Mr. LAZZARINI.—I merely alluded to it in connexion with the Prime Minister's statement this morning that it was necessary for the Government to remain in office in order that he might go to London to represent Australia at the Imperial Conference. The members of the Labour party, and our supporters outside, and I believe the majority of the people of Australia, would rather that Australia were represented in London by almost anybody else than by the Prime Minister.

Mr. CHARLTON (Hunter) [3.8].—The honorable member for Wimmera (Mr. Stewart), who said that the members of the Country party were refused pairs by members sitting on this side of the chamber, must realize, as an old politician, how difficult it is to pair with a party when you do not know, from day to day, what attitude that party are going to take up on any question that is before the Chamber. No one knows which way the Country party are going

to cast a vote. We do not know whether they will be for or against the Government, and consequently it is impossible for us to pair with them, even if we so desire. The honorable member stated clearly and candidly that he was against the Government carrying on the business of the country. If he said anything at all, he said that the Government do not command his confidence. What I want particularly to bring under the notice of the House is the statement of the honorable member's leader (Dr. Earle Page). I was waiting this morning for the Leader of the Country party to rise in his place, and make some statement regarding the transactions of yesterday. In view of the lecture delivered to him by the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) this morning, I think it was the honorable member's place to rise immediately, even before the Leader of our party, with a view to clearing his party from the aspersions cast on them. Now that he has made a statement, I, for one, welcome it, because, if he has told the Prime Minister anything to-day, he has told him that, so far as the Country party are concerned, he will have no immunity from attack during his absence if he should go abroad. The Prime Minister made it clear here, on Friday, that he would not be justified in going abroad to the Imperial Conference unless he had some guarantee that, in his absence, the Government would be protected. The honorable member who leads the Country party said that he resented the statements that had been made concerning them by the Prime Minister, but that they were not going to wet nurse the Government; that the Government had their own Whips, and their own methods of conducting their business, and that his party were not going to be dragged behind the heels of the Government.

Mr. GREGORY.—When you have gone that far, why not give all that our Leader said?

Mr. CHARLTON.—What more would the honorable member like me to give?

Mr. GREGORY.—That he would repeat the promise he made the other day.

Mr. CHARLTON.—Yes; he said he would repeat the promise he made the other night, that, so far as he reasonably could, he would support the Government.

The Prime Minister, however, says that unless he gets a definite promise from the House that nothing untoward will befall the Government during his absence, he does not think he should undertake the journey abroad. The Leader of the Country party said very clearly, and the House must not lose sight of the fact, that he was supporting the motion now before the House because it was a motion for the adjournment of the House for the purpose of permitting the Government to further consider the position in which they are placed. He did not say he was supporting the motion on the ground that its object was to vindicate the Government. The honorable member for Dampier (Mr. Gregory), who is the Deputy Leader of the Country party, knows that that statement emanated from his Leader. The result is that the Government stand to-day where they stood last night when the motion for the adjournment of the House was carried, irrespective of what may be the fate of the motion for adjournment which is now before the House. Even if this motion is carried, that will not clear the Government, in view of the statement deliberately made by the Leader of the Country party.

Mr. GREGORY.—Nobody suggested that it would.

Mr. CHARLTON. — Evidently the honorable member wishes that it would.

Mr. GREGORY.—Oh, no.

Mr. CHARLTON.—All it means is that the Government have to consider their position, and the Prime Minister has already made it clear to the House that he will not go abroad unless he has a definite understanding that his Government will be immune from defeat while he is away. In words which cannot in any way be misunderstood, the Leader of the Country party now says, "I am not going to give immunity to any Government." In fact, he went so far as to say that he would not be in a position to do so. I take it that the Country party have their own platform, and are tied down by certain rules and decisions of their own conference, and therefore their Leader cannot promise the Government immunity. If that is so, it brings us to a position which the House has to face.

It is said that it is absolutely necessary for the Prime Minister to go abroad so that Australia may be represented at the Imperial Conference, and not remain unrepresented, as happened in 1917. The Prime Minister says that he cannot go unless he is assured of the stability of his Government in his absence. When the Leader of the Country party says he cannot give the Prime Minister the guarantee that he asks for, it puts the Prime Minister in this position: If he goes now, in face of that statement, without having an absolute majority on the floor of the House to carry on the affairs of the country, he is responsible for whatever happens in his absence. If he has not an absolute majority on the floor of the House, then he has not an absolute majority of the people of Australia behind him. The Leader of the Country party also pointed out very clearly to the Prime Minister—I am trying to follow his statement, and he will correct me if I am wrong—that, if the Prime Minister was not satisfied with his position, it did not follow that there should be a dissolution and an appeal to the people, because, he said, the possibilities of the House were not exhausted. He added that there was nothing to prevent a Government being formed in this House that would carry on the affairs of the country. If that is the position at which we have arrived, then the Government should act, and act promptly. They are in no better position than they were in last night. If they have not a majority, and if we want to be represented at the Imperial Conference, and the time is so short, the Government must allow the Governor-General to exhaust the possibilities of the House for the formation of a Ministry to carry on the affairs of Australia. If a change of Government takes place, what is to prevent the incoming Government, if it is sufficiently strong, from appointing a man to go abroad to represent Australia at the Imperial Conference? There is the position as I see it, and we cannot escape it. According to the statement made by the Leader of the Country party, if the Government, on reconsidering their position, decide to continue in office, and if anything happens in the future, such as happened yesterday—which is quite like

because, where parties are evenly divided, it is only necessary for one man to be away for the fate of the Government to be settled—then they must take the responsibility.

While the position remains as it is, and in view of the statement of the Prime Minister last Friday, the Government have only one course open to them, if they have the interests of the people of Australia at heart, and if they wish to have this country represented at the Imperial Conference. That course is to resign, and allow the possibilities of the House to be exhausted. If my Leader, the honorable member for Yarra (Mr. Tudor), cannot form a Government, or if his Government when formed are defeated, the Governor-General can still fall back on other resources. He can call upon the Leader of the Country party to form a Ministry. No one can say that any honorable member chosen by the Governor-General cannot get a sufficient majority behind him. It is quite possible that a member may be found who will get a working majority which will enable him to carry on the business of the country while permitting some one to adequately represent Australia at the Imperial Conference. But if anything is to be done, it must be done at once if whoever is to represent us in London is to leave in sufficient time to do so. If we dilly-dally for a week or two, probably until just before the Prime Minister leaves, we may have a recurrence of what happened yesterday, and may find that the business of the House is taken out of the hands of the Government. In such circumstances, the Government would be compelled to resign, and there would be no hope of Australia being represented at a Conference which means so much to its future interests.

This motion has a definite purpose: to give the Government time to reconsider their position, and nothing that may happen to-day can justify them in saying that they will go on next week.

Mr. HECTOR LAMOND.—The Government did not adjourn the House yesterday, but they propose to do so to-day.

Mr. CHARLTON.—They did not ~~adjourn~~ the House yesterday, but

they made it a crisis by declaring that the carrying of the motion had taken the business of the House out of their hands. Thereupon, they called a meeting to consider the situation, and as a result they come to-day to ask for a vote to test their position. My friends in the corner say that they will vote for the motion in order to give the Government further time to consider their position; but they do not say that they are in favour of the Government carrying on, and they will not give the guarantee for which the Prime Minister asks, namely, immunity for the Ministry during his absence. The Prime Minister said, very definitely, that unless he got that guarantee of immunity he would not think of going abroad to represent Australia at the Imperial Conference. If in this House the parties are equal in numbers, and if no party represents a majority of electors, the only thing to do is to exhaust the possibilities of the House. Then if we cannot find within it a Government with a backing sufficient to transact the business of the country, and also send a representative to the Imperial Conference to do justice to Australia, we should go to our masters at once and allow them to say who is to govern this country.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY (Hume) [3.19].—The deduction to be drawn from this debate is that every one outside the ranks of the Government is unanimous that the only decent thing the Government can do is to resign. The Leader of the Country party (Dr. Earle Page) said it, and every honorable member of the Labour party who has spoken has said it. But I cannot see the consistency of the attitude adopted by the Leader of the Country party when he says that he and his party are prepared to vote for the motion which the Government have submitted to-day. To be consistent with the vote he and his party gave yesterday, when they voted with the Labour party, they ought to vote against the Government's motion to-day. Otherwise, they stand convicted of the charges levelled against them by the honorable member for Bourke (Mr. Anstey), which so greatly perturbed the honorable member for Wimmera (Mr. Stewart). The honorable member for Wimmera always be-

comes perturbed when an honorable member from this side reminds the Country party of the votes they have cast within the last eighteen months in this Parliament. The honorable member and others who vote with him may say what they like, but the division lists as recorded in *Hansard* will show exactly where the Corner party have stood during the last eighteen months. Nine times out of ten—in fact, every time the fate of the Government was at stake—some number, great or small, of the Corner party was to be found coming to the rescue of Ministers; and no matter whether the honorable member for Wimmera speaks from now until this time next year, he cannot wipe out the past record of his party. He says that the people of the country have become distrustful of the Labour party and of the National party, and have sent representatives of the Country party into Parliament, maintained them there, and even show a disposition to increase their ranks; but although it may be unpleasant to the honorable member, I would draw his attention to the fact that the latest appeal to the country has had quite a contrary result. In the South Australian elections last week, the Country party was practically wiped out; and I venture to say that the reason for its obliteration was the record in this House of the party that stands under the same banner. The honorable member claims that that is a State, and not a Federal concern; but, as a matter of fact, on the last occasion on which there was an appeal in a Federal way to the people of this country, namely, at Ballarat, the candidate of the Country party lost his deposit, and the candidate of the Labour party was returned by a substantial majority. The facts are all against the honorable member for Wimmera. The point I am endeavouring to make is that the decision of the Country party, apparently arrived at during the luncheon adjournment, to grant the Government this adjournment, is absolutely inconsistent with the vote they cast yesterday. It merely serves to show that they are willing to meet the Government in every possible way. The only way in which they can be consistent with their vote of yesterday is to vote against the Government's request for this adjourn-

ment. In fact, the words of the Leader of the Country party bear me out. He said that the only decent thing the Government could do was to resign; and, in view of his words, the only logical action his party can take is to put the Government into the position of having to resign at the earliest opportunity.

Mr. RYAN.—They want time to climb down.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—As the honorable member for West Sydney has said, the Country party are again coming to the rescue of the Government by showing them a way out of their difficulty, and announcing that they are prepared to vote with them again. The members of the party may say it in their own way; but if they are really serious when they declare, as they did this morning, that they do not intend to wet-nurse the Government, or stand as supporters of it, the only thing they can do is to vote against this motion. That is the only thing they can do if they are going to be consistent.

I do not wish to say much else except to remind honorable members that the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) definitely said that certain members of the Country party had assured him that they did not know what they were doing yesterday, or they would have voted otherwise. At least one member of that party, the honorable member for Grampians (Mr. Jowett), nodded assent to the Prime Minister's statement.

Mr. JOWETT.—Pardon me, you are wrong. I did not nod assent to any such statement.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—I still believe the honorable member did.

Mr. JOWETT.—No; I nodded assent to the Prime Minister's statement that there was no intention in my motion to embarrass the Government.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—That is exactly what I am saying.

Mr. JOWETT.—No. The honorable member is saying something totally different.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—It is distinction without a difference, in

opinion. The Prime Minister said he believed members of the Country party did not wish to disturb or embarrass the Government. I shall endeavour to give the Prime Minister's exact words. He said that he had it from some members of the Country party that they had no desire to embarrass the Government, and the honorable member nodded assent. I called attention to it at the time.

Mr. JOWETT.—You are totally wrong.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Has the honorable member ever given a vote in this House without knowing what it was about?

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—No; I have not.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—I do not believe the honorable member.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—The records of yesterday's debate show that the Treasurer does not always know what he is saying. It is not the first time the Treasurer has been in that position, so I can reciprocate his kindly feelings.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—I have been in that position on many occasions, and so, no doubt, has every other honorable member.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—But this does not screen the honorable member for Grampians, at all events. I stand to my statement, and I say that I believe that in submitting his motion yesterday he had no desire to embarrass the Government.

Mr. JOWETT.—I certainly did not, but I wished to have my motion carried.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—I am glad at last to have an admission from the honorable member for Grampians that he did not wish to embarrass the Government. That has been my contention all along. But if, as he declares, he had no such wish, how can he say now that he wanted his motion carried? He cannot have it both ways. The statement made by the Prime Minister this morning was a charge against certain members of the Country party.

Mr. JOWETT.—I did not nod assent to that either.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—I do not think it was a charge against the

honorable member for Wimmera (Mr. Stewart) or the honorable member for Franklin (Mr. McWilliams), who at a conference recently in Sydney threatened that he would screw the neck of the Government. In this connexion, I may remind the House that, because of his indiscretion on that occasion, the honorable member for Franklin (Mr. McWilliams) can no longer claim to be the Leader of the Country party, for the simple reason that a majority of our honorable friends in the Corner wish to be regarded as a pro-Government party. Hence, because of his injudicious utterances, the honorable member for Franklin lost his job.

In view of the damaging statement made by the Prime Minister to-day, no self-respecting party could have done other than accept the challenge. But instead, they waited until the dinner adjournment so that they could come to some kind of a decision. All this confirms me in the belief that the members of the Country party are still trying to play into the hands of the Government by giving them the week-end to consider the position instead of voting against this motion for adjournment.

One of the principal reasons advanced by the Prime Minister in his attempt to bludgeon the Country party to vote for the motion is that he feels in duty bound to attend the Imperial Conference as the representative of the Commonwealth. I have said on other occasions, and I want it recorded again, that if I had my way the Prime Minister would never go out of this country as a representative of the people of Australia. I do not believe he represents the people. This is borne out by the very latest developments in this House, the Government being defeated by two votes on a definite motion. Consequently, I do not believe that a majority of the people desire to have him as the representative of Australia at the approaching Conference, and so his argument should have no weight with any section in this House. The motion now under discussion should be treated on its merits. The position, as I see it, is that the Prime Minister asks for the adjournment in order that the Government may consider the position, and the Leader of the Country party, speaking, I presume,

for the whole of his party, has told the Prime Minister that there is only one decent thing for the Government to do, and that is to resign. Therefore, to be consistent, members of the Country party should vote against the motion.

Mr. McGRATH (Ballarat) [3.34].—I would have been surprised, after the vote yesterday, if the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) had tendered his resignation to the Governor-General. Knowing the Prime Minister's career, and remembering the ex-Senator Ready scandal, as well as his declaration on the hustings that if conscription were not carried he would resign, I am not at all surprised that he submitted to defeat yesterday and still retains his position as Prime Minister. But this he ought to know from to-day's debate: that although he may have a majority to-day, he has no guarantee from the Country party of immunity from attack during his absence. The Leader of the party (Dr. Earle Page) made that declaration.

Mr. STEWART.—And that stands.

Mr. McGRATH.—Well, with this declaration standing, the Prime Minister ought not to go to England as the representative of Australia. He was defeated on the floor of the House yesterday by a combination of two parties. That vote proved conclusively that he represents a minority of the people. I would be delighted if, as a result of what happened yesterday, this Parliament had to face a dissolution, though personally I do not want another election. I have had quite enough recently, but I would rather have another election, if by that means we could prevent the Prime Minister from misrepresenting Australia at the Imperial Conference. We know the way in which he played with the White Australia policy at the last Imperial Conference; we do not forget the extent to which it was jeopardized by his action in allowing the control of the question to be taken from Australia and handed over to the League of Nations. In view of these facts, we object to the Prime Minister going abroad as representative of Australia. We particularly object to his representing Australia at the forthcoming Conference, at which Australia will probably be asked to join with Great Britain in spending £15,000,000 or

£20,000,000 a year on battleships, and also to agree to some form of conscription proposed by people who do not live in Australia. Our desire is that we shall be represented by some one who rightly understands Australian sentiment—by some one who appreciates our freedom, rather than some one who has been used to bowing and scraping to others in older countries. If this crisis does no more than demonstrate to the world that the Prime Minister no longer possesses the confidence of the people, and thereby frustrates his efforts to go abroad as the representative of the Commonwealth, it will have achieved some useful purpose.

As to what the Country party may or may not say, I am not concerned. They are fairly intelligent men, and quite able to look after their own business.

Mr. STEWART.—That is the first kind of thing that has been said of us to-day.

Mr. McGRATH.—Some members of the Country party may at times be inconsistent, just as the honorable member for Wimmera (Mr. Stewart) was a little while ago. Gesticulating wildly, the honorable member said that the Labour party was always opposed to the Government, whereas in a speech made by him only last week he said, pointing to the Ministerial party, "There is organized capital," and, pointing to the Labour party, "There is organized labour. Both will be found voting side by side." Today he says that the Labour party is always opposed to the Government, irrespective of what its proposals may be; but the other day he said that the Labour party, in so far as the Tariff was concerned, would be found voting with the Government, because it considered that the Tariff was for the benefit of the people.

Mr. STEWART.—We are told that the Tariff is a non-party question.

Mr. McGRATH.—With us it is a question, not of party, but of principle. We fight for principle alone; we have our platform, and we stand for it and fight for it. We have been what Mr. Deakin once described as "the third eleven" in this House. While in the past we have voted to put out a Government, and a week or two later have voted to put out another, we were actuated throughout by the one guiding principle. If the Country party think that by voting again

the Government on one occasion, and submitting to the taunts and insults of the Prime Minister, and reversing their vote on the following day, they are likely to grow in the esteem of the people, I have nothing to say. It is entirely their own business. But my view is that such an attitude would do them no good. I am, therefore, exceedingly pleased that the Country party have taken up their present stand. There is room for only two parties in this House—the party which represents the workers, and the other party which represents the loafers.

Mr. JACKSON.—On a point of order, I ask for a withdrawal of that offensive remark in which the honorable member suggests that our party represents the loafers of the country.

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. Sir Elliot Johnson).—The honorable member for Ballarat (Mr. McGrath) spoke in general terms as to there being room in the House for only two parties, and made no reference to any particular party in the House at present as representing the "loafers."

Mr. JAMES PAGE.—No one referred to the honorable member for Bass (Mr. Jackson) as a loafer.

Mr. MCGRATH.—I did not apply the term to any honorable member, but I know that we have loafers in the community, and that some of them control some members of Parliament.

Mr. MCWILLIAMS.—Does not the honorable member think that some of the workers vote with the "loafers"?

Mr. MCGRATH.—Yes; otherwise there would be no representatives of the "loafers" in this Parliament. Unfortunately, owing to the introduction of side issues at a general election, many people vote against their best interests.

I recognise that the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) before Wednesday next will have arrived at a satisfactory solution of this problem. Knowing his capabilities as an underground engineer, I feel satisfied that before we meet on Wednesday next he will have obtained some form of assurance, on the strength of which he can proceed to England as the representative of Australia.

Mr. MCWILLIAMS.—Is the honorable member quite sure that we shall meet on Wednesday?

Mr. MCGRATH.—I hope we shall not. I should like this crisis to be brought to a head at once. I should like the Prime Minister and his Cabinet to be defeated and another party given an opportunity to govern the country. I realize that it is essential to have a representative of Australia at the Imperial Conference in June next; and with the Leader of the Country party (Dr. Earle Page) I take exception to the manner in which the Prime Minister has used that Conference for party political purposes—purely to strengthen his party and to keep his Government in power. I would remind the House that if a crisis occurs on Wednesday next, and results in the resignation of the present Prime Minister, there will be nothing to prevent either the Country party or the Labour party taking office and the new Prime Minister sailing in the near future for England. The new Prime Minister, whoever he might be, would be a better representative of Australia at the Imperial Conference than the present Leader of the Government.

Mr. LAVELLE (Calare) [3.42].—It is rather remarkable that the time of the House should be taken up in discussing a motion of this kind. In view of the vote which was given against the Government yesterday, it is a mere waste of time for the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) to ask the House to agree to a motion for adjournment in order that the Cabinet may have an opportunity to consider their position.

Mr. RYAN.—The Prime Minister should have telegraphed his resignation to the Governor-General last night.

Mr. LAVELLE.—The only honorable course open to the Government was to resign at once. There is no occasion for the House to adjourn to enable the Government to consider what action they shall take. Their chief anxiety it seems to me is to arrive at ways and means of avoiding their removal from office. I have listened rather attentively to the debate to-day, and particularly to the speeches made by the Prime Minister and two honorable members of the Country party. It seems impossible for the Country party to justify their decision

to vote for this motion for the adjournment of the House in order that the Government may have time to consider their attitude, having regard to the way in which they voted against the Government yesterday. If the Country party meant anything by the vote yesterday—and two honorable members of the party have said that they did—then there is no reason why they should vote to-day to give the Government time to consider their position. If they do, they will never be able to explain their conflicting votes to the satisfaction of the people. The attitude taken up by the Country party towards the Government is clearly set out in a leading article published in this morning's issue of the *Age*, in which it is said—

The action which led to the contemptible anti-climax came from Mr. Jowett, a member of the Country party who votes with the Government, and often candidly speaks in its favour. In this respect he differs from most of the other members of his party, who roundly attack the Government, and even vote against it when it is safe, but are extraordinarily careful when there is a suggestion of danger.

That is the attitude of the Country party. If there is any possibility of the Government being defeated, they take fine care to see that some members of the party will vote with the Government. The honorable member for Grampians (Mr. Jowett) was quite sincere when to-day he nodded assent to the suggestion of the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) that, in submitting his motion yesterday, he had no intention of harming the Government. The Leader of the Country party (Dr. Earle Page) admitted that it was not the intention of the members of the Country party to take a vote on the motion for adjournment yesterday, and that it was taken only because the Government did not have a sufficient number of their supporters put up to talk the motion out. To-day, he told us that the members of the Country party were desirous of taking a vote on the question. If they were, how could the Leader of that party, after a meeting of the party, which lasted for several hours, make a statement to the representatives of the press that the fact that a vote on the motion was taken was due to the fault of the Government in not having put up speakers to prevent it? I listened attentively to the speech of the

honorable member for Illawarra (Mr. Hector Lamond) to-day. He made one of his usual vicious attacks upon his opponents. Those who know the honorable member as I do know that he has always been particularly vicious in attacking an opponent.

Mr. BRENNAN.—Did not the honorable member use the word "betray?"

Mr. LAVELLE.—He did, and no one should be a better judge of a betrayer. I can remember a time when the honorable member was an opponent of the Labour party, and when no one was more bitter than he against that party. He afterwards became a member of the Labour party, and when he was managing director of the *Australian Worker* there was no more bitter and vindictive critic of the capitalistic class than the honorable member was. He has changed his political coat on many occasions, and to-day he has made a bitter attack upon the Labour party, and has had the audacity to say that the members of that party are not very much concerned about the White Australia policy. He has said that the honorable member for West Sydney (Mr. Ryan) did not accurately put the position when he insisted that the Prime Minister had handed over the question of a White Australia to the League of Nations. But the statement made by the honorable member for West Sydney is absolutely true in every particular, as every member of this House must know. The honorable member for Illawarra stated that he secured for us the right to make the same laws for the territory over which we have been given a Mandate as we have to make laws for Australia itself. If the Prime Minister handed over to the League of Nations, as he did, the right to interfere with Australian domestic legislation in respect to the law dealing with immigration, that was certainly handing over to the League the right to deal with the White Australia policy. The League of Nations has now the right to interfere with our immigration laws, and it has the same right to interfere with immigration legislation in respect of the mandated territories.

The Prime Minister to-day used, as a political battle cry, the necessity that he

should go to London to represent Australia at the Imperial Conference. We who know the right honorable gentleman said last night that he would make use of that in order to bludgeon the Country party into support of the Government. His purpose is to throw the blame upon our shoulders, or upon the shoulders of the Country party, if Australia is not represented at the Conference by him. I say that, so far as honorable members on this side are concerned, we consider that the Prime Minister cannot adequately represent the people of Australia at the Imperial or any other Conference. He can only misrepresent Australia, because he is out of touch with the people, and does not represent Australian ideals or sentiments. It is in the interests, and not against the interests, of Australia that he should be prevented from attending the Imperial Conference. I shall, personally, do my best on this and on every other occasion to prevent the Prime Minister misrepresenting Australia on any question.

Mr. HECTOR LAMOND.—What ideals can the Prime Minister not represent?

Mr. LAVELLE.—He cannot represent the ideals of the majority of the people of Australia. The honorable member who interjects cannot represent any ideal at all. He has never been able to represent his own, because he has always changed from one to another. It seems to me farcical to debate this question, because if the members of the Country party meant anything by the vote which they recorded yesterday they must vote with us against the Government to-day. There is no occasion to give the Government time to consider the position. They should have already considered their position, and the only honorable course open to them was to have resigned last night.

Mr. CORSER (Wide Bay) [3.51].—There is unquestionably a very serious position confronting us. It is far more serious than many honorable members seem to think. It behoves us to consider well what is expected of us at this time when it is so important that the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) should represent us at the Imperial Conference. I have great respect for many of the members of the Country party, and I believe that the majority of them

act with common sense and justice. I am confident that the honorable member for Grampians (Mr. Jowett), who submitted the motion for adjournment yesterday, was quite sincere when he stated distinctly that he did not launch that motion in the slightest degree against the Government or the Nationalist party.

Mr. JOWETT.—That is so.

Mr. CORSER.—I think that the members of the Country party were sincere when, on the floor of this House, they gave a pledge that they would not do anything which might prevent the Prime Minister taking up his duties in representing Australia overseas. I have confidence that at least the majority of the members of that party will honorably fulfil the pledges they have given in this House.

Mr. MATHEWS (Melbourne Ports) [3.53].—I wish to address myself to the position of the Farmers party in this House. I heard the honorable member for Wimmera (Mr. Stewart) claim that they were returned in spite of the other political parties. As a matter of fact, they got here with the consent of the other parties. We might just as well understand their true position in this House. The authorities of the Nationalist party said to the electors, "For God's sake keep the Labour party out, and give the Country party's candidate your second votes." At the same time the authorities of the Labour party appealed to Labour voters to keep out the so-called Nationalist candidates, and give their second votes to candidates of the Country party.

Mr. BLAKELEY.—In other words, "Throw your vote away."

Mr. MATHEWS.—Yes. The members of the Country party in this House are representatives of the thrown-away votes. It puts me in mind of the fact that the other day I saw some little children playing. One little girl was running along the street at the head of a number of others, and when I asked what game they were playing, she replied, "We are playing motors, and I am the stink." She was the cast-off of the others.

Mr. JAMES PAGE.—Does the honorable member mean to say that the Farmers party are the "stink"?

Mr. MATHEWS.—They are here to annoy both of our parties. They are quite justified in doing so. The members of the Nationalist party cannot complain, because they helped to place them where they are, and we, on this side, cannot complain, because we did the same thing. At some twenty-four meetings in the country districts I implored Labour electors to give their second votes to Farmers candidates, and the Victorian members of the Farmers party owe their return to the second votes of Labour electors. The honorable member knows as well as I do that he holds a seat to which the same man has never been returned twice; a constituency that is as coy as a maiden. The Government cannot complain; it helped to elect the Country party. The Opposition cannot complain; it also helped to do so. The Country party annoys both of the others. But I am more cheerful to-day than I was last night. Then I anticipated a nasty election; now I think that the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) has arranged things satisfactorily, and I am satisfied.

Question put. The House divided.

Ayes	43
Noes	19
—	
Majority	24

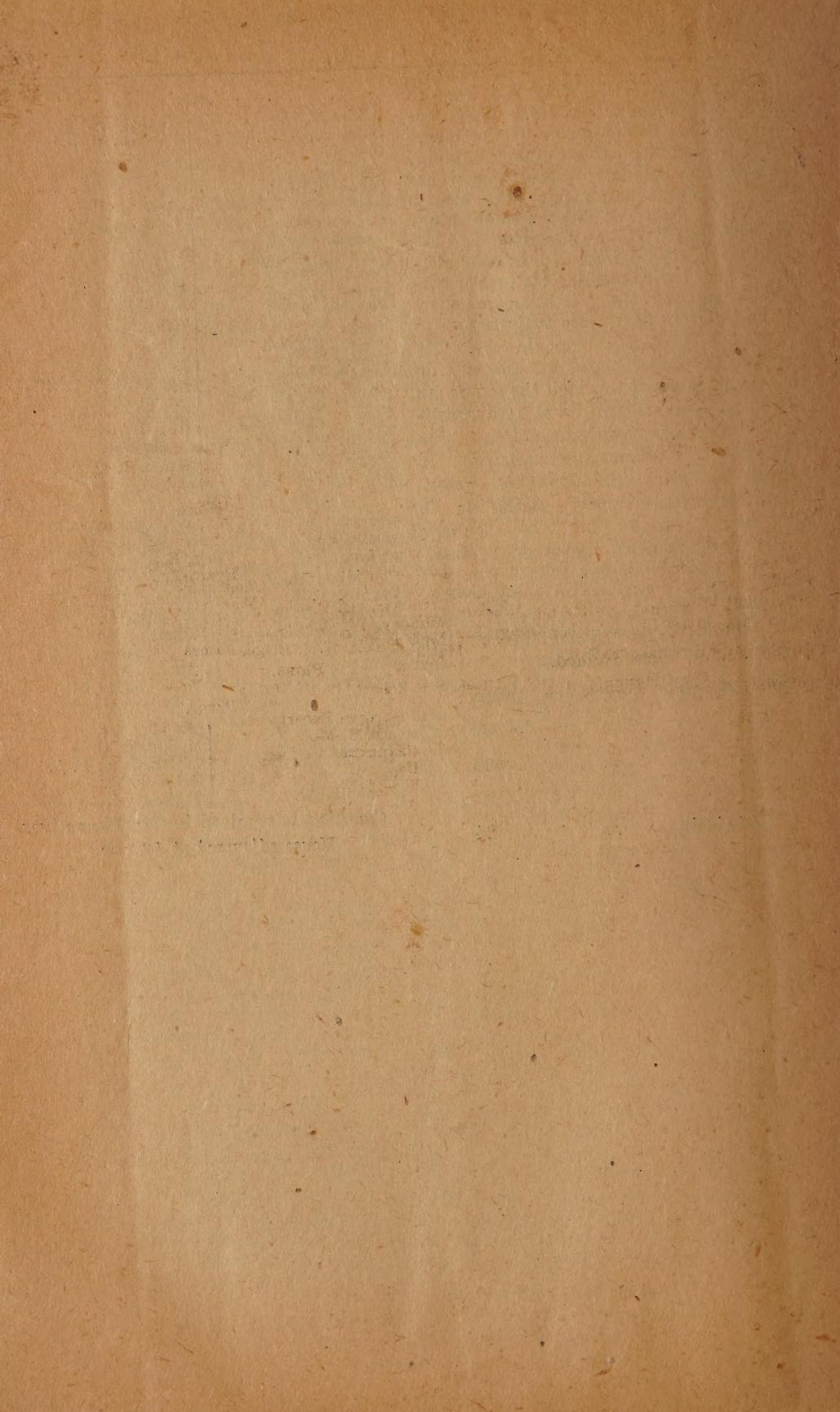
AYES.
Hughes, W. M.
Jackson, D. S.
Jowett, E.
Lamond, Hector
Lister, J. H.
Livingston, J.
Mackay, G. H.
Marks, W. M.
Marr, C. W. C.
Maxwell, G. A.
McWilliams, W. J.
Page, Dr. Earle
Poynton, A.
Prowse, J. H.
Rodgers, A. S.
Ryrie, Sir Granville
Smith, Laird
Stewart, P. G.
Wise, G. H.
Tellers:
Burchell, R. J.
Story, W. H.

NOES.
Moloney, Parker
Nicholls, S. R.
Riley, E.
Ryan, T. J.
Tudor, F. G.
Watkins, D.
West, J. E.
Tellers:
Anstey, F.
Page, James.

PAIRS.
Best, Sir Robert
Bruce, S. M.
Chapman, Austin
Hay, A.
Wienholt, A.
Maloney, Dr.
McDonald, C.
Cunningham, L. L.
Catts, J. H.
Gabb, J. M.

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

House adjourned at 4.3 p.m.



Members of the House of Representatives.

Speaker—The Honorable Sir Elliot Johnson, K.C.M.G.

Chairman of Committees—The Honorable John Moore Chanter.

Anstey, Frank .. Bourke (V.)	Hughes, Right Hon. William Bendigo (V.)
³ Atkinson, Llewelyn .. Wilmot (T.)	Morris, P.C., K.C.
⁷ Bamford, Hon. Frederick Herbert (Q.)	Jackson, David Sydney .. Bass (T.)
William	Johnson, Hon. Sir Elliot, Lang, (N.S.W.)
Bayley, James Garfield .. Oxley (Q.)	K.C.M.G.
Bell, George John, C.M.G., Darwin (T.)	Jowett, Edmund .. Grampians (V.)
D.S.O.	⁵ Kerby, Edwin Thomas Ballarat (V.)
Best, Hon. Sir Robert Kooyong (V.)	John
Wallace, K.C.M.G.	Lamond, Hector .. Illawarra (N.S.W.)
Blakeley, Arthur .. Darling (N.S.W.)	Lavelle, Thomas James .. Calare (N.S.W.)
Blundell, Hon. Reginald Adelaide (S.A.)	Lazzarini, Hubert Peter .. Werriwa (N.S.W.)
Pole	Lister, John Henry .. Corio (V.)
Bowden, Eric Kendall .. Nepean (N.S.W.)	Livingston, John .. Barker (S.A.)
Brennan, Frank .. Batman (V.)	Mackay, George Hugh .. Lilley (Q.)
Bruce, Stanley Melbourne, Flinders (V.)	⁸ Mahon, Hon. Hugh .. Kalgoorlie (W.A.)
M.C.	Mahony, William George .. Dalley (N.S.W.)
Burchell, Reginald John, Fremantle (W.A.)	Makin, Norman John Hindmarsh (S.A.)
M.C.	Oswald
Cameron, Donald Charles, Brisbane (Q.)	Maloney, William .. Melbourne (V.)
C.M.G., D.S.O.	Marks, Walter Moffitt .. Wentworth (N.S.W.)
Catts, James Howard .. Cook (N.S.W.)	Marr, Charles William Parkes (N.S.W.)
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⁴ Considine, Michael Patrick Barrier (N.S.W.)	McWilliams, William James Franklin (T.)
Cook, Right Hon. Sir Parramatta (N.S.W.)	Moloney, Parker John .. Hume (N.S.W.)
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Cook, Robert .. Indi (V.)	Page, Earle Christmas Cowper (N.S.W.)
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gomerie	(N.S.W.)
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Hill, William Caldwell .. Echuca (V.)	Wienholt, Arnold .. Moreton (Q.)
	Wise, Hon. George Henry .. Gippsland (V.)

1. Sworn 27th February, 1920.—2. Sworn 3rd March, 1920.—3. Appointed Temporary Chairman of Committees, 4th March, 1920.—4. Made affirmation, 5th March, 1920.—5. Election declared void, 2nd June, 1920.—6. Elected 10th July, 1920. Sworn 21st July, 1920.—7. Appointed Temporary Chairman of Committees, 13th May, 1920.—8. Expelled and seat declared vacant, 12th November, 1920.—9. Elected 18th December, 1920. Sworn 6th April, 1921.

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* Appointed 14th April, 1921.

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